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TWENTY-SIX

SERMONS

OF WHICH

EIGHT ARE REPUBLISHED

BEING, SIX OF THEM, PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, ONE, BEFORE THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON, AND ONE, IN TRINITY COLLEGE CHAPEL

BY RICHARD RAMSDEN, D. D.

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LONDON:

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PREFACE.

Concerning the first sermon in the following publication and which is on *Justification by faith* it may be proper to mention, that it was in substance preached before the University of Cambridge in that month, in which Mr. Marsh, afterwards Dr. Marsh and Margaret Professor of Divinity and who afterwards became Bishop of Llandaff and then soon after Bishop of Peterborough, first appeared in the University Pulpit, as one of the select Preachers. The author, who heard his discourses, is inclined to think there is between this and them some connexion. Perhaps his Lordship, of whose intention to print there was at the time a rumour, will, if the author's surmise be just, *now* print.

Concerning the second sermon, which is on the *Assurance of faith*, it may be proper also to mention, that it was in substance preached in Trinity College Chapel, the then Lord Bishop of Bristol being Master. A small part of it was likewise delivered in Latin on a creation, as the phrase is, of a

D.D. before the University, it being the preamble to the description also in Latin of the office or honours of a D.D. or of the compliments he may be entitled to receive on such an occasion. What was said at both these times had a reference to a late publication of Mr. now Dr. D'Oyly and then domestic Chaplain to Dr. Sutton the present Lord Archbishop of Canterbury. The name indeed of Mr. D'Oyly was not mentioned nor was the criticism minute. But then enough was said for the *refutation* of Mr. D'Oyly's positions, if the author may be excused so bold a term, which however has not long ago been used by a Bishop of *the Church of England* claiming to himself the honour of *refuting* Calvin.

Mr. D'Oyly was at this time Christian Advocate, a title of a theological office in the University, and Chaplain, as has been said, to the Archbishop. But then he did not publish this work, dating it, as was once done by a Chaplain writing against the British and Foreign Bible Society, from Lambeth Palace. Though he published, as Christian Advocate, he did not even print at the University Press. Mr. D'Oyly indeed transcribes from the will of Mr. Hulse, who was the founder of the office, these expressions, as if they were his warrant for the subject, he has handled, viz: "any *new* or *dangerous* error either of *superstition* or *enthusiasm*." But then, if such a matter had escaped Mr. D'Oyly's reading, he will allow, it was natural for the author, considering the

chair he once sat in, to remember how Davenant Margaret Professor of Divinity could in the theological school of the University maintain this thesis; "*Vere credentes certi esse possunt de suâ salute.*"*

Concerning the sixteen sermons, which follow these two, it may now be proper and perhaps, sufficient to say, that they may tend to correct the clumsy and erroneous sentiments of Bishop Warburton said to be still held by some in the Church, as also the mistaken representations of a late Hulsean Lecturer, Christopher Benson, who agreeably to the will of the founder, published, as D'Oyly did his Pamphlet, what he preached before the University, to take one remarkable instance, on the faith of Abel.

Amongst the eight sermons, of which a second edition is now published the reader will find in the *Right to Life*, part 2d, a remark or two on the crime and punishment of forgery. Since the first publication the law on that crime has undergone a partial change or relaxation. The punishment is not now in all cases *death*. The change, it was said at the time, was very much occasioned by considerations of humanity, the temptation to forgery owing to the extensive circulation of paper money of a small denomination having become extremely great. Doubtless, considerations of humanity had their influence on the case, but then the main reason was

* See his 'Determinationes quæstionum quarundem theologicarum. Cantabrigiæ, 1634. Quæst. 3.'

or ought to have been the cheapness of money occasioned by its plenty or by the multiplication of it in that paper circulation. Let the reflections suggested by these observations be transferred by the reader to the above passage. It is hardly necessary to add, that the two sermons on the *Right to Life* were preached, when the bloody French Revolution was thought by many eminent persons to derive support from the doctrine then almost every where current and expressed in such language as this, of the *unalienable, imprescriptible* Rights of Man.

Another of these sermons being on *War and the final cessation of all hostility* contains sentiments, which with those in the above sermons on the *Right to Life* may deserve the attention of those Societies, which under the name of *Peace* Societies are established both in England and America, and to military men, who have scruples on the lawfulness of their profession they may likewise be recommended. They have removed the scruples of one Officer, who had met with a pamphlet, in which soldiers are designated, as *murderers*. To which probable use of these sermons may be added another drawn from the first mentioned. That sermon may serve to shew, how repugnant is the doctrine of a *free* trade amongst nations, if the word *free* be not used in an absurd sense, as it was denounced to be on high authority in a certain protest by four Lords of Parliament, to the very first principles of reason and nature. There might *perhaps*, be a *free* trade,

if the inclination of the axis of the earth to the plane of its orbit round the sun were to undergo an alteration, which would *certainly* change seasons, climates, and products, and perhaps, soils, and men.

The sermon on the *Alliance between the Church and the State* may perhaps remind the reader of those parts of the history of Popery, which represent it as maintaining the principle of separating the Church from the State and of setting up the former in dominion over the latter. Nor perhaps, will it escape him, how the Protestant Dissenters in this country and even the like denominations of Protestants in North America, maintain one portion of the above Popish principle, the principle of separating the Church from the State, nor, if he prosecute his reflections further, will he fail to discern, how infallibly this portion of the above principle tends to the other, and connects itself with it. The examples indeed of encroachment and usurpation, like to the Popish, are for reasons which need not be given, but few. But then, though they be but few, the reader cannot but remember one at least, which is just at his home. He will remember, how the Ministers of religion, say, Ministers of the Gospel of Christ, did once by furious zeal, and by terrific eloquence, both in the pulpit and in the circles of private life, overawe the leaders in the commonwealth of England; and influence them to bring the first Charles to trial and to the scaffold. He will remember, that this was their fashion of encroaching

and usurping, a fashion indeed, which has been sometimes used by Popish priests themselves. Nor will the reader perhaps, dislike to listen to a more modern story just told in the Proceedings of the London Missionary Society chiefly supported by *Independents*, the name of the Cromwell party, of a *little* Queen in the Southern Archipelago, who having been guilty of a wanton act of oppression was brought to trial before a lay judge; the Missionary, the Minister of the Gospel, appearing indeed in Court, *in plano*, if the picture prefixed to a Lady's pocket book for 1827 be correct, but secretly prompting the investigation and the decision. Happy Queen! the reader may exclaim. She now knows, in whose hands she is, and doubtless, acts accordingly. Happy Queen! the reader will go on to say, happy as those Kings and Queens, Emperors and Empresses, who have in Christendom delivered themselves up and do still deliver themselves up to the Pope!

Another of these sermons is on *the Baptism of Infants and Education*, and the Author being in possession of an anecdote gives it to the Public with the view of confirming some part of the language employed on the first of these topics. A Baptist Minister so called from the sense the Divines of his communion put on the word βαπτίζω was requested with reference to an Act of Parliament on the population of the country to furnish for ten years successively, the ten years preceding the time of the

request, a list of the adults he had baptized, distinguishing those, who, to adopt his expression, had been previously *sprinkled*, from those, who had not. From his answer it appeared, there had been eighty baptized during those ten years, of whom one only had not been previously sprinkled. The rest, the seventy-nine were converts either from other dissenting congregations or from the Church of England. Let the reader take this extraordinary fact with him to the perusal of the first part of this Sermon. The congregation, in which this minister officiates, is numerous. It contains between three and four hundred privileged members, of whom many are heads of families. And what in these families the Author asks, is *the nurture* of their children ?

At the end of this sermon are two allusions, one to the discovery of vaccination by Dr. Jenner and the other to Acts of Parliament, sometimes called *Insolvent* Acts, and with reference to the first, the Author takes this opportunity of mentioning, that he heard with his own ears in the Physic School of the University the King's Reader in Physic say, that Dr. Jenner had after vaccination inoculated in the Suttonian method his own son, and with reference to the other he cannot but express his ardent hope that e're long imprisonment for debt will be abolished, and all imprisonment, except such, as is necessary for preventing the flight of the accused on account of his crime, and for keeping him in safety, till trial, from the private revenge of his accuser.

These are the only legitimate ends of imprisonment. As a punishment, it is usually disproportionate to the offence. It commonly destroys the health, commonly also the moral feeling, and sometimes, with the almost unavoidable destruction of these two, life itself.

In the body of the sermon is the proof, that the knowledge of the Being of God is from Revelation only. The Author, when he gave this proof to the Public, was aware there was another notion generally prevalent, not only amongst the learned, whom he then lived near, but also amongst all the learned in perhaps all nations from one end of Europe to the other, perhaps, from one end of the world to the other. He was aware, that that other notion was with all its supposed consequences or inferences in all libraries, and in many volumes. He had read in Ellis* what awakened his doubts on that notion, but did not in Ellis find the proof. Though Ellis was learned and laborious, he had not made it out.

The Author considering himself as entitled to the honour of the discovery of this proof, was still distrustful, not of the soundness of the proof, but of the reception, it would meet with, and though desirous of communicating it, was still unwilling to shew it in broad daylight, lest by the assemblies of the pious and learned he should be thought an intruder, who had lost his modesty. He had in this sermon

* Ellis's Knowledge of divine things from Revelation not from Reason or Nature. Second Ed. London 1771.

his first opportunity, and was glad the proof could in a way so little likely to attract notice, though he reckoned on its not being altogether unobserved, be submitted to the Public. He finds it has not entirely escaped observation, but still from the fugitive nature of a single sermon it has reached but a very small circle; perhaps, he has not one certain scholar in his school. He still finds the sermons and other publications of his day to be on the old track; they still ring changes on natural Religion; they still confute Atheism, Deism, Socinianism, and Arianism on the old plan. Clarke, Paley, and Hamilton are still appealed to as to a point, on which they ought not to be heard.

The Author's proof, which was in this sermon will now be, though still in the sermon, in a volume of considerable size; the volume will also be itself thick enough to have the name of the Author on the back of it, and large enough to occupy a place on an open shelf, and the curiosity, which may take it down and read the Preface, may after perusal turn to this sermon. And then, perhaps, if conviction should attend the proof, the Reader will confess, how dear to him Revelation ought to be, how his best charities will be in the distribution of the Bible. He will likewise now own, how easy the confutation of error is become, while he will give vent to a sigh, that shall be forgiven him, when he reflects on the genius and labour, that in the service of God and Religion have been lost, on the toil of the

printing press, that has been wasted, and on the clearance, that may now be made in libraries, of the fruit of that genius, labour and toil. Clarke's *Demonstration*, he will now learn, may disappear, and the Bishop of Ossory's *Attempt* may now be no more read.

GRUNDISBURGH PARSONAGE,
SUFFOLK.

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SERMONS.

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JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

ROM. V. 1.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

AMONGST the doctrines of the Bible nothing can be more plain than that the doctrine of Justification by faith is frequently mentioned. It appears in the very first pages of the book. How our first parents, Adam and Eve, were justified after their condemnation, is not indeed said, though, as a deliverer is mentioned in the sentence, which was passed on them, and, as it may reasonably be inferred, that they offered sacrifice, and had the expectation of a Saviour to be born of a woman, it may also be reasonably concluded, that they had faith in that Saviour. The history however, is quite clear, as commented on by St. Paul in the case of one of their sons, how he was justified, how he became

righteous by faith. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, and by it he being dead yet speaketh.**

The doctrine appears in the subsequent pages of the book. We need not go into the detail. That detail, as to a large part of it, and as to the old Testament is given by St. Paul. We shall mention the story only of the brazen serpent, as being much to our purpose, that being the story, which our Saviour himself has told us has a special respect to this doctrine. That serpent was lifted up for the Israelites to look up to, and be healed, prefiguring the lifting up on the cross of the body of Christ, *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life.*†

What more there is on this doctrine in the Gospel pages, we need not say, having out of them given this story and the comment of our Saviour upon it. There is certainly in them on this doctrine other matter of the like kind. Neither need we go into the Epistles. Let the text be their specimen, which too is taken from that Epistle, where the doctrine is written, as with a beam from the sun.

It is not to be expected of a representation given of a doctrine, that there shall not be difficulties in it. Doctrines are matters of high import. They are of moment far beyond the consideration of evidences, or points of history. They touch on the nature and circumstances of man, things, on which philosophy has expended so much wit and so much toil to understand. They touch on the dealings of God with

* Heb. xi. 4. † St. John iii. 14, 15.

man, on the intercourse of God with him, on the very attributes and character of God, on the very character too and offices of his Son, and on the very character and offices of the Holy Ghost. The Bible indeed does not enter much into exposition or explanation. It is manifestly written for popular purposes. It deals much in facts, and states doctrines much after the manner of facts, as truths not to be questioned. On this very doctrine of justification by faith, though it be in nearly every page, either in lesson or example, though it be as the thread of gold running through the tissue of the work, it does not even say, whence the term justification is itself taken, nor even give a definition of faith. Such matters, if we study doctrines, as we may well do, we are left to make out for ourselves by the methods commonly used in our other searches after the principles of reason and truth.

What Justification and Faith are, we will now upon these remarks state ; and also, what the Peace is, which they who are justified have through Christ.

It is manifest from the Scriptures, that God is the moral governor of the world, or, which is the same thing, and which explains that general denomination, that being made up of these, that he is a King, a Lawgiver, and a Judge. This is the plain and obvious representation of the character of God in every book both of the old and new Testament, and especially in those books, which are contemplative, devotional, or doctrinal, in holy meditations, as in the Psalms, in descriptions of actual or foreseen punishment of sinners, in repentances and prayers. It is hardly necessary to explain these titles. One of them, which is Lawgiver, explains

itself, and another, which is Judge, is familiar enough, nor is the title of King obscure. This last denotes power, power in God to do whatsoever he pleases in heaven and in earth, and morally considered, and as connected with the other titles, his power to confer rewards, and his power to inflict punishment.

It is also manifest from the Scriptures, that these characters of God exhibited under these titles are permanent fixed characters. God is always a King, always a Lawgiver, always a Judge. It is not to our purpose to take up distinctly the consideration of the two first of these characters, though in what we have to say, they cannot be far out of sight. Of the latter only, which is the character of Judge, we purpose to speak distinctly, and of this we say, that he, who is the King and the Lawgiver, is always, as he may well do, conducting a present judicial enquiry; that he is represented in the Scriptures, as always sitting on the seat of judgment, having in contemplation and under cognizance the principles and conduct of every individual amongst men from the first actual display of this character in Paradise, after man had broken the law, to the end of the world. To adopt a language familiar amongst ourselves, God is represented as always holding a present court, a court of judgment and enquiry with reference to the present acceptance or rejection of every child of man.

A solemn reflection this, if our account of this matter be true, that we should all, and each of us, be constantly from the cradle to the grave under a present judicial scrutiny, and that of a judge whose eyes are as a flame of fire, whose mind too is never

weary and whose memory never fails. A reflection this adapted to do us good, to make each of us look into ourselves, to incline each of us to fear Him, who can justly destroy, and believe in Him, who can certainly save.

In proof of this account we have appealed to the Scriptures and certainly on this topic we have no other appeal to make, but to revelation. We do not know, but from revelation, even the being of God itself, much less can we learn, except from thence, his names, his characters or proceedings. On this point let the display in Paradise of his judicial character be considered; let that scene be remembered, in which he first appeared, as a Judge, to investigate guilt and pronounce sentence on the guilty. Let the depravity, we inherit from our first parents, be considered; let that perpetual offence handed down from father to son, that never-failing apostacy, that perpetual breach of law ever demanding judicial interference be kept in mind. Let the open and secret sins of mankind be considered, the transgressions of the members of the body, and the transgressions of the bosom, both ever equally moving the judge to scrutiny and to judgment. Let the denunciations of the Scriptures, let the meditations, the repentances and prayers of all the saints there be considered. Let the scene, too, which closes the book of Job, be remembered, and, if that scene be thought dramatic, though it cannot certainly be proved to be so, yet that point granted, let our sentiment be confirmed from thence. The displeasure of the Judge, before whose probation and scrutiny all were found offenders, was averted only by the blood of expiation. Let it also

be remembered as a plain point in history, that under the old œconomy God did at times actually appear upon a throne, in one place at least, where he planted a formal copy of it, though probably, as the throne was unquestionably moveable, not in one place only; let it too, be noted, that this throne was pre-eminently the throne of law and precept, and of course, of their guardian the Judge, and that he did there almost literally take his seat upon the backs of the Cherubim, and that considered as so seated there he was entreated by the worshipper not to punish, and diverted only from punishing by victims of blood substituted for the worshipper, conscious and convicted. Let it likewise be remembered, that the power of the King and authority of the Lawgiver are by the daily defiance and provocation of sin both greatly insulted; and let it be considered, that this insult on both these living characters of God demands by an urgent necessity the very office of the Judge, of him, who is to maintain the dignity of the King, and the honour of the law by enquiring into the breach, or observance of it, and by unfolding its sanctions.

From the old Testament, to which we here chiefly appeal in proof, we may now pass to the new, and, as in the new nearly all formal, shadowy institutions, nearly all ceremonial procedures are done away, as after the visit of the Son of God in the flesh there are now no personal interviews, so to speak, between God and man, no intercourse but through the Holy Spirit, as there are now no victims to be offered on earth, and no other throne to stand before, but the throne in heaven, where God and the Lamb are seated, the proof we are to expect of this point

in the new must consist chiefly of the terms employed by the writers of the books of the new. And certainly the terms there employed to describe the court, we speak of, are sufficiently frequent and clear to prove the existence of it, especially in the Epistle to the Romans, that book of the new Testament, in which beyond all the rest, the doctrine of justification is treated of. Nor have these terms been otherwise considered than as a satisfactory proof of this court by a writer, who opposed the doctrine of justification in the sense, we understand it, and who would have the author of the Epistle to the Romans to mean by justification nothing more than the mere assumption of the Christian name, or the mere entrance into the Christian Church. And certainly, as this writer wrote a laboured commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, and even a Key to the Apostolic writings, he being an adversary is in the enumeration he gives of the terms and the explanation of them, no bad evidence for the construction we give of them.

"To understand rightly," he scruples not to say, "the Epistle to the Romans, it is further necessary to observe, that the Apostle considers mankind as obnoxious to the divine wrath and as standing before God the Judge of all. Hence it is, that he uses forensic or law terms usual in Jewish courts, such as law, righteousness or justification, being justified, judgment to condemnation, justification of life, being made sinners and being made righteous. These I take to be forensic or court terms, and the Apostle by using them naturally leads our thoughts to suppose a court held, a judgment seat to be erected by

the most high God, in the several cases, whence he draws his arguments. For instance ch. 5. he supposes Adam standing in the court of God, after he had committed the first transgression, when the judgment passed upon him for his offence came upon all men to condemnation; and when he and his posterity by the favour and in the purpose of God were again made righteous or obtained the justification of life. Again ch. 4. he supposes Abraham standing before the bar of the supreme Judge, when as an idolater, he might have been condemned; but through the pure mercy of God, he was justified, pardoned, and taken into God's covenant on account of his faith. He also supposes ch. 3. all mankind standing before the universal Judge, when Christ came into the world."

This writer proceeds further than this in this matter. He carefully distinguishes between this court, this present court, and the future court of the day of judgment. He goes on soon after thus. "But besides these three instances, in which he supposes a court to be held by the supreme Judge, there is a fourth to which he points ch. 2. and that is the final judgment, or the court, which will be held in the day, when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. And it is with regard to that future court of judicature, that he argues, ch. 2. But in the other cases, whence he draws his arguments, he supposes the courts of judicature to be already held and consequently argues in relation to the œconomy, constitution, or dispensation of things in the present world. This is very evident with regard to the court, which he supposes to be held

when our Lord came into the world or when the Gospel constitution was erected in its full glory."*

To this proof which we have given from the old and new Testament of the existence of a present court, contenting ourselves, as to the new, with this writer's proof from the Epistle to the Romans, we may now enter into a detail of distinctions between it and the future court; which distinctions, being themselves scriptural, may confirm the proof, or may at least, throw a light upon it.

The judgment of the last day, the future court, is for the dead and the living, but this present court is for the living only: this is a judgment for man here during the term only of his natural life, having in itself no connection with the last. The last judgment is a formal procedure, conducted with form and ceremony, it is a public, an open procedure to which the dead and the living will be all summoned together by the sound of the trumpet of the Archangel. But this process, though as real as the other, is conducted entirely under the new œconomy, and generally under the old, without the formalities of a court; it is a secret procedure before which each individual in the successive generations, in the order of his being, appears, and not in the view of others; it is a silent, secret process. It resembles in this respect the operations of God in nature and providence, which are silent and secret, and which for being so are not the less real. Neither is this the less real for being unseen and unheard. It is the silent secret process of mercy and

* Taylor's Key to the Apostolic writings § 310. 311. prefixed to his Paraphrase on the Epistle to the Romans.

righteousness in the kingdom of grace, a known real kingdom, as those other operations are of providence, of bounty and power in the kingdom of nature.

There are other points of distinction. The judgment of the last day is for the clear separation from each other of the righteous and wicked in the view of both, but this present process is not for so clear a separation. It is necessary the separation should be clear on the last day, that being one of the main objects of that day, but of this other judgment this is not the main object. The tares and the wheat may grow together now. The lamps of the virgins of the Church, which have oil in them, may not now be known from those, which have none. The secret benevolence and the secret hostility done to the members of Christ's body may both alike be secrets now, but on that last day these secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, and the separation shall be as clear as that which the shepherd at evening makes between the sheep and the goats, both during the day feeding at large promiscuously together. The judgment of the last day is too, for the conferring of honours and rewards and for the inflicting of disgrace and punishment; it is for the conferring on the righteous their last and greatest honours and rewards and for the last and severest inflictions on the wicked. The scheme of Christianity being an intermediate scheme lying between the state of man in Paradise and the morning of the general resurrection, the final judgment is for the combining of the state of man in Paradise with the new state he is about to enter on, and it is for the open declaration of the innocence and righteousness of those, whose sins have been atoned for by the

atonement of Christ and who in his obedience have been made righteous, and it is itself, the first exhibition of their exaltation and bliss, the first throwing open of the portals of heaven, whilst, as to those, whose sins are still upon them, having not been atoned for by the atonement of Christ, and who have not been made righteous in his obedience, it is for the open declaration of their disobedience and guilt, and is itself, the first exhibition of their pains and horrors, the first throwing open of the gulph of Hell. The judgment of the last day is not for pardon and justification at all.

If we are ever pardoned, if we are ever justified, it is in this other process, to which we are subject, while we live on earth. This is the process, which is for pardon and justification and for rejection and condemnation, as opposed to them; this is the court in which the title to heaven is gained or lost. In the judgment of the last day the Son is seated on the throne of judgment; the Son is the Judge, whilst the Father acts, as the King, and only as such, with his power, the power to punish and the power to bless. But in this court the Father sits on the seat of judgment; the Father is the Judge. In this court the Son is the Pleader, the Advocate, the Intercessor, the Mediator.

As we thus mark the distinctions between the two judicial enquiries, the Scriptures speak of, or between the two courts of judgment, the one, the future open court at the day of judgment, specially so called in which the Son of God is Judge, and the other, the present secret court, in which the Father is Judge, we arrive at certain inferences, which it is suitable to add. And, as we con-

template in this last court God the Father in the character of Judge, as we bring before our view, on the one hand, the party, who is on trial, namely, the sinner, and on the other, the party, who appears for him, namely, Jesus Christ, the Advocate and Mediator, as we do this there is no difficulty in perceiving that legal or judicial terms, such as are used in all courts of law, not in the Jewish only, to which the writer, whose testimony we produced, is inclined to confine the Apostle's terms, have here, in this court, a proper, a descriptive, a clear significance. The pardon of sin is the remission of the punishment due to sin, remitted here, in this court, because the Advocate, the Mediator has endured that punishment, because he is there in the court with the scars of the penalty upon him. The acquittal of the sinner is the pronouncing of him innocent, as if he had been falsely accused, not because he is falsely accused, or is in himself innocent, but because another's innocence, the innocence of the Advocate is imputed to him. The justification of the sinner is after pardon or remission of punishment the pronouncing of him righteous, the giving him a claim on the ground of positive merit and righteousness to exaltation, to honour and happiness, a claim in this court admitted, not because the party, who is on trial, is righteous, but because the Mediator, who is present, has obeyed the law for him, has wrought out a righteousness of spotless beauty, which is imputed to him, which is as the white robe fitting him for the company of angels.

Having thus reached, what we wanted, the term justification, we now proceed to consider the nature of faith, and taking again into our contemplation the

parties, who are together in the court of judicature, we speak of; first, the Father, the Judge, who is taking cognizance of the case, with the view of doing justice, with the view, as the case is always the case of the guilty, of inflicting vengeance on his head by the various ministers of vengeance, such as the world, and sin, and the fearful pains of Hell; next, the Son, who interposes between the wrath and frowns of the Judge, and the guilt and fears of the culprit; then the culprit himself, conscious, trembling, and distressed; what can the faith of the sinner be, but a taking refuge under the wing of the Advocate, under the protecting, covering plea, which he offers to the Father? What is faith, but reliance on the interposing mediator, not only the leaning of the understanding assenting and approving, but also of the heart, of the will, and affections, which are the sensible movements of the will making choice of this Saviour?

When faith is called by preachers or writers an assent to the truths of the Gospel, or as it is in one important respect more emphatically represented by the Author of the Essay on Human Understanding, a firm, full assent to whatever is on satisfactory evidence divine revelation, the principal objection to this way of speaking is in the general, sweeping terms, describing the object proposed to faith, namely divine revelation, for there is a large part of that revelation, which, in strictness, is not for faith. Precepts for instance, make a part, a large part of it, but then they are certainly for obedience not for faith. They are assented to or obeyed in faith, but then that assent or obedience arises out of faith previous to that assent or obedience, and if that assent be it-

self faith, it is an act of faith subsequent to another more important, the act, we have just described, and therefore the assent itself, though it be faith, is in this case, in strictness, obedience only. To which let it be added in order to bound these sweeping terms the more, that obedience is not essential to salvation. It is not essential to forgiveness, the first denomination, so to speak, of salvation, the initial step and degree of it. Forgiveness can only flow from reliance on the Mediator. If obedience were essential, what must we think of the provisions of the Gospel; what must we say to those cases, where there is opportunity to believe, but none to obey; what to the hoary headed sinner dying after long obduracy, but in dying, believing; what to the harlot forsaken of all but her Redeemer; what to men of all ages taken off in the ambush of death?

There are also certain facts divinely revealed, and perhaps, not few in number, which are not essential parts of religious knowledge, and consequently not in strictness, necessary for assent or faith. As for instance, it is not, in strictness, necessary for us, at least, who are Gentiles, to know that Christ descended from David. That he was a Jew, or the Messiah of the Jews, are facts not essential for us at least, to know, unless it can be shewn, that they are indissolubly connected with the fact of his life, and the fact of his death. And, if that can be shewn, they are not essential, unless it can also be shewn, that they are indissolubly connected with the intent of his life and death, for even his life and death themselves considered apart from that intent are not essential to be known. But facts not essential to knowledge are not essential to faith.

The examination and settling of these and the like facts are in the highest degree useful, as furnishing evidence of the mission of Christ, as making it fuller and clearer, than it would otherwise appear, or as vindicating to the eye of reason the claim of revelation to be such. But that Christ, as our representative, as the second Adam, as the second fœderal head of mankind, of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, lived a life of perfect obedience to the will of God and ended it with dying also in obedience to that will, and that in his sufferings and death he bare our sins in his own body, are the only facts in strictness, essential to be known, and consequently the only essential objects of faith. That satisfaction was made for the sins of the whole world, of the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and that a title to the grace of sanctification here and to glory and happiness hereafter was procured by the same death, which made the satisfaction, are essential to be known and believed throughout all the world. The way of mercy must be essential.

When the author of the Essay on Human Understanding represents faith, as a firm, full assent, supposing the conclusion of his account to be altered in the way we have suggested, the account will itself be free from exception. By the epithets *firm* and *full* the account will bear on the heart as well as the understanding, on the whole of the mind of man, on his will and affections, on his choice as well as on his genius and discernment. By the epithet *full* the assent must be unreserved, humble and resigned, neither cavilling nor captious; and by the epithet *firm*, it must be such, as is not easily shaken by specious arguments, by the desires and

passions from within, or by seducing and menacing assaults from without; it must be such, as, the author in one place says, ought to overrule all opinions, prejudices, and interests. "Whatsoever," he says, "is divine revelation, ought to overrule all our opinions, prejudices, and interests, and hath a right to be received with full assent."* His sentiment under the modification we propose, will vindicate those, who say, that faith is not a mere assent, that it is not a mere reception of a well authenticated narrative, that it is not cold criticism through its many volumes scarce ever dropping one pious reflection, that it is not bold presumptuous learning handling revelation without charity, without any soft emotion, without distrust of its ability to comprehend. His sentiment will under this view of it authorize the opinion, that faith coming by instruction in its way through the understanding descends with an almost contemporaneous influence to the heart. His description will under this view of it, approximate to that faith or be one with it, by which the great and learned lawgiver of Israel *chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin,* the pleasures of a court, *for a season*; by which *he esteemed the reproach of Christ,* let us mark that phrase, *greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.* His description will class with those, which speak of faith, as realizing the judicial scene and process before stated, as exhibiting the terrors of the Father, the Judge, and the mediation and interposition of the Son by blood; it will agree with those, which speak of faith, as putting the sins

* Locke, Vol. ii. p. 356.

of the sinner on the body of Christ for that body to bear the penalty, as putting over the filthy garments of the sinner to hide his filthiness and shame the glorious beautiful spotless robe of the righteousness of Christ; it will combine with those, who speak of faith, as knitting the heart to Christ, as uniting it to Christ with an adherence like the union of the branch and the vine, as giving to the believer by a lively operation, to adopt the language of the Church, "spiritually to eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood," as making "him to dwell in Christ, and Christ in him," as making "him to be one with Christ, and Christ with him."

It is hardly worth while to notice a definition supposed by some divines to be such, which is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, for it is manifest, that when it is said, *faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen,* it is spoken but after a popular fashion, and means but this result, that faith gives a substance to the things, which are the objects of hope, and a reality to the things which are not the objects of sight.

We shall now go to our last topic, which is on the peace, they who are justified, have with God through Christ. And our first remark is this; that, when in the court the plea of the Advocate Jesus Christ, of his blood and merits prevails for the sinner, the character of God the Father, as hitherto there seen, almost entirely disappears. To the believer made one with Christ the Father of heaven is now no longer the severe judge with the frown of terror, with the enquiring eye and voice, with the ministers of vengeance around him. The other names of the character of God, which have a real

orderly arrangement in the moral scheme begin now to unfold themselves agreeably to that order. The severe judge now passes into another character. He is now the tender reconciled father, the tender reconciled friend, in whose heart is now no longer any thought of vengeance. Satisfaction has been made for sin; honour has been put on the law; sin shewn to be sin indeed, and the moral constitution and scheme begins to take its ancient, its original form. Man now again stands before his Maker on the footing of innocence, of exemption from guilt, having the spilled blood of expiation to shew; he now again stands before his Maker on the footing of obedience, having a perfect spotless obedience, though another's, to produce as his own, having a claim in his hand of merit and virtue, which God acknowledges, and which re-establishes the original paradisiacal plan of making happiness the reward of obedience. There cannot now be in the mind of God any other thought than the ancient thought, such as he had in Paradise, of favour and love and friendship.

Our second remark is this; that this love and friendship in the mind of God is not a silent, secret, tranquil affection, but an active vigorous love shewn by plain marks, by signs not to be mistaken, or forgotten. In the purchase, which Christ made for man of the Father's favour, there is more bought than the title to heaven, than the bliss to come after death. His blood is the blood of sanctification as well as the blood of atonement and obedience. By it are bought the influences of the Holy Ghost communicated to men on earth, and which, though noiseless, teach the understanding and warm the

heart. Though in the private chamber they chiefly visit, yet they are visitings, which prepare the man for public business, for public action, for the daily task. They are monitory visitings awakening him to thought and reflection, disclosing the snares and dangers of sin, the temptations and arts of the world the flesh and the devil. They are corrective visitings, chastening and refining his inward parts, and gently reproving his follies; they are also visitings, which comfort him under the stings of disappointment and the rod of adversity, which support him against scorn and contumely and contempt, and in the lonesome hour of sickness, when all things else create a weariness, never cloy the soul, but spring up there, as a fountain of living water, ever sweet and fresh. They are with the believer in his last extremity, in the last decay and disgrace of his beauty and strength, in his last lying down to die.

Our third and concluding remark is this; that this love and favour of God, as it is exhaustless, so is it never wearied, never disgusted. In the mind of God there can be no weariness or satiety, as to the love, he bears his Son. His love therefore can never tire with respect to those, for whom his Son has successfully pleaded, and who in that plea are one with him. He cannot now resume the character of the judge; he must now always be the reconciled father. As a father he may correct his children; in displeasure at their folly or frowardness, he may hide his face, and with the rod chastise. But the chastisement can now be only that of a father always ready to take again to his fond embrace even the most froward of his offspring. In the everlasting, mysterious union, both in essence and

will, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the covenant of redemption made between them before the foundation of the world, and which covenant is to endure till the day, its uses cease, there is a sufficient pledge, that towards those, whom God the Father elects and calls, the Son and the Holy Ghost will not be wanting on their part; that those, who are one with Christ, are also one with the Father; that there can be no dissolution of that mystical bond, no rending of the cord of the Spirit.

Such is the peace, which they, who are justified by faith, have with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Such is the principal fruit and blessing that comes by faith. Let us now consider, whether we have the faith, which is the parent of this fruit and blessing. The consideration involves serious consequences. Having not the faith it is impossible for us to contemplate the scrutiny and judgment, before which we all always stand, without a trembling heart. Having it we stand before that tribunal with sweet complacency, with glowing hope, with filial love.

II.

THE ASSURANCE OF FAITH.

HEBREWS XI. 1.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

THE frequent mention in the Scriptures of faith and of the effects of it has given such importance to that word, that much search has been made into its meaning. It is natural for the mind of man on a term, concerning which so much is said so closely connected with his conduct and happiness, to be much engaged in the enquiry. He cannot, as to such a term, but be desirous of a satisfactory resting place. If he sincerely wishes to be a true believer, he must wish to understand, what faith is.

The Apostle seems in the text to tell us, if the mere grammar of the sentence, the mere form of the language be to be regarded, what faith is. *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* And some have called the text a definition, and perhaps on this account, though perhaps not all, who have so called it, mean to have it strictly so considered. Unquestionably other descriptions of faith have been generally adopted, and

by those, whom the Apostle's description in the text has by no means escaped. We hear of assent frequently, of assent to revelation, to the word of God, of a sort of assent, that seems all things considered, like assent to an history. We hear sometimes, though not so often as we ought, of reliance on Christ the Mediator, which is certainly the true, the primary description of faith.

If it be asked, why the text, which seems to define faith, does not really do so, it may, in the way of answer, be said, that the Bible is written not so much for the wise and learned, as for the simple and unlearned, that it is not written so much for the wise or for philosophers, who use a precise language, as for the poor, who are usually unlearned, and whose conversation is free and unrestrained. It may next be said, that the Bible abounds with language, which is like the text, where the cause and the effect are so put together, as if the one described the other, though nothing more be meant than to shew in a forcible, lively, and popular way, how surely the effect follows from the cause, how nearly the effect is of the very essence of the cause.

It may be said further, in the way of example, that when our Saviour says of himself, *I am the way and the truth and the life,* he certainly does not mean to define himself; he means only to shew, how every other way which is devised by man, as leading to happiness or to heaven, is of no consideration, when compared with the way to which he points; he means only to shew, how all other truth, by whomsoever taught, is of no consideration, when compared with the truth he teaches, and in the last name only to unfold, how all other life, or enjoyment

of life is of no consideration, when compared with the life, which he by living and dying and by living again bestows on men. It may also be further answered, taking a second example, that when an Apostle says, *God is love*, he does not mean to determine the nature or the essence of God, but only to shew, how God by redemption gives the greatest proof of love, as if He were all love, who gives so great a proof.

It may be said further, if any thing more be necessary, that in the account, which St. Paul in his other writings gives of the doctrine of justification by faith, it is quite plain, how faith has respect first and chiefly to the Mediation of Christ, and that therefore, when in this Epistle he says, *faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*, he certainly does not determine the nature of faith, but means only to shew how faith gives a substance or a body to what a believer hopes for, and brings within the grasp of his mind the things, his eye sees not, as if it were only faith, which gives this body and this present reality.

It is not to our present purpose to state distinctly the doctrine of justification by faith, and particularly as we have done this in the first discourse. But if faith procure justification and if justification be pardon, if it be acceptance, if it be acquittal from guilt, if it be the title to heaven, if it be the right of admission after death into everlasting glory and bliss, then, on the authority of the text, faith also brings near, and applies to the bosom this justification. On that authority faith must give the taste of pardon, the serenity of acceptance, the joy of acquittal and release, the cheering consolation of a

title to so glorious an inheritance as heaven. What a blessing, let us here pause and say, O sinners, is this for you, who believe! What an unspeakable privilege, if you have but the true faith. Have you the true faith? *Examine yourselves*, it was once said to other believers, *whether ye be in the faith.**

There is unquestionably a court held, though secret and invisible, in which enquiry is ever making, in which the parties are the Father making enquiry, the Son interceding and pleading, and man guilty and convicted. But then on the authority of the text, though this court be secret and invisible, there is to the sinner convicted and believing in the Son, to him putting his trust in the Son, in the protecting, interposing plea of the suffering Son, a discovery in some sort made of the love of the Father forgiving in this court, and of the love of the Son interceding and conciliating there by suffering and by blood. What an unspeakable privilege, let us repeat, O sinners, is this for you, who believe! An ancient disciple under the Jewish scheme, even under that dark scheme, could say, *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*;† and the beloved disciple under the Christian we hear thus speak, and speak out fully, as suits that scheme, *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.*‡

Let it not be objected, that this representation of this effect of faith, of the assurance of faith is of a dangerous tendency, that it is adapted to foster presumption and pride in a Christian, that it militates against those passages of Scripture, which

* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. † Psalm xxv. 14. ‡ 1 St. John v. 10.

inculcate humility and poverty of spirit. Let not this be objected, for faith is itself a principle of humility, nay, it is a principle of the deepest humility. It is not, it cannot be in exercise, but as it is in the school of humility, on the lowest form there. It can only be in exercise with the view of sin before it. It cannot be in exercise, but as it has in it the nature of repentance, as repentance does not deserve the name, unless it have in it the nature of faith.

Faith is not, it cannot be in exercise, but as it has respect nearly or remotely, immediately or mediately, to the scene, or to the court of Mediation, so to speak, we have before referred to. It is not, it cannot be in exercise, let the repetition be excused, but with the view of the ill desert and mischiefs of sin before it, but with the view of the cross of the suffering Saviour. Though there be joy in faith, though there be peace in it, yet that joy and peace have their foundations always laid in the wretchedness and worthlessness of human merit. The cup of salvation, though it be pleasant to the taste, has always a bitter ingredient in it. Though it be tasted with the glow of thankfulness it is always still tasted with poverty of spirit, with contrition and humility.

Neither let it be objected, that this representation of the assurance of faith tends to encourage sloth, and to deaden the exertions of the believer; that it militates against those passages of Scripture which inculcate the necessity of watchfulness, and self-denial. Let not this be objected, for faith with the view before it, which we have described, of the anger of God, and of the sacrifice made to appease it, must have ardent desires and longings in it. It must

be awake, it must be alive in its haste to escape from vengeance. In taking refuge under the cross it must be, so to speak, winged with speed. Nor is the believer thus awake in his first faith only; but as every other subsequent act of faith is of the same nature with the first, and is excited by the same view and apprehension of sin and of the cross, as the first, he will be alike awake in his subsequent as in his first faith; he will be so unto the end of his days, when he ceases to believe, when his faith is swallowed up in actual vision and enjoyment. If he could be supposed to lose this view and apprehension of sin and of the cross, as he would cease from believing, so would he cease from being watchful, but not otherwise. If he could be supposed to forget the harms and mischiefs of sin, the present mischiefs of it and those to come, as he would cease from believing, so would he cease from renouncing sin and from repentance and self-denial, but not otherwise. But if he do not forget, if he keep his faith, it is impossible he should not have an aversion to sin, to every open and every secret sin, to every corruption and wrong desire, and in this aversion deny and mortify it; it is impossible for him not to crucify, to use an Apostolic phrase, his worldly affections and appetites. Let us again pause, and ask, have we this true faith, this living, watchful, humble faith, this faith that purifies the heart? Or is ours the faith of presumption; the faith of sloth; the dead, unproductive faith?

Under this representation it becomes easily intelligible, how with the faith of assurance there may still be mixed much anxiety, much misgiving, and doubt. Anxiety, misgiving, and doubt arise

very much from the changes and chances of life, and from the infirmities of our feeble nature, struggling feebly with those changes and chances, from the temptations of sin, of the world, of the destroyer of souls the devil, and also from wrong desires partially, or wholly indulged. But it is manifest, from the circumstances, from the very description, that these sources of doubt and anxiety will enter into and even make a part of the convictions and uneasinesses of sin ; that they will be, as teachers to him, who has believed, being, while they are sources of doubt and anxiety, sources also at the same time of a firmer reliance on Christ, and of a closer adherence to him. They will be his teachers, teaching him repentance anew, teaching him again and again self-mistrust, self-renunciation, and humility, the very humility, to which God giveth grace, *more grace*. The anxiety and doubt will also themselves often be, but as the passing cloud, crossing the path, and hiding, though scarce hiding, the full beam of day. They will also often be, but as the winds to the growing plant, which, while they move it to and fro even to its seeming downfall, promote the growth of it and in its growth its beauty and vigour.

Under this representation likewise it is not unsuitable to consider, whether it accords with the examples of the ancient saints. Let them be taken any of them, such as the Scripture furnishes, and let it be tried by them. Let the example of St. Paul himself be taken. It is not possible to give on this occasion the whole of his history, nor is it necessary to do so. The particulars we want are but few and are very plain. He was a penitent;

he was always a penitent. He was a sinner; he was always a sinner. He was distressed with sin; he was always distressed with it: he was so, when he was dictating his best lessons, making even this account of himself one of his best lessons.* He was always at the foot of the cross; he gloried in nothing but that cross; he preached nothing but Christ crucified. Yet though thus distressed, though thus always as a sinner at the foot of the cross, he was always in the full faith of forgiveness, he was always in the assurance of faith. And further, though always in the assurance of faith, he was still always watchful against the propensity to sin, even that propensity, which he knew to be itself forgiven; he was still always aiming at the very perfection of holiness; he still always kept his body in subjection; he was always still aiming at the full stature of the perfect Christian, of the Christian reaching his hand forth to take hold of the highest and most honourable virtues; he always did this, as if *the crown of righteousness,* that was his on another account, were to be his for *his virtues' sake.*

Let it not be said that the Apostle derived his assurance of faith from the miraculous gifts or powers he was endowed with in his Apostolical office. These would doubtless confirm or strengthen his faith, and aid him in the attainment of the assurance of it. But then as there is no necessary connexion between those miraculous powers or gifts, considered as official, and the faith of the individual, that confirmation of faith or aid derived from them must be entirely left out of the question,

* Romans vii.

and the assurance of faith must always be considered as really owing to the faith of the individual, as indeed the history, as given by the Apostle, the language of it being properly interpreted, of the assurance of faith he had attained, plainly informs us, it even in his case was, the influence from his official powers or gifts being only accidental, and at most only heightening the other derived from his habit of faith, as an individual.*

Let us now in conclusion say, that this is a subject worthy of our most serious attention. It must be so, as in our faith lies the foundation of all our hopes, the beginning of our salvation and the completion and comfort of it. Surely we ought to wish to understand how, as St. Paul will speak, the righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel *from faith to faith*.†

* See the history of Balaam in the old Testament, and in the new the history of Judas, to which add the history of the Heretics in the Apostles' days. They had had, even these heretics, most of them, had had miraculous gifts or powers, but had had no faith.

† Rom. i. 17.

III.

THE FAITH OF THE ELDERS OF THE TWO ANCIENT CHURCHES.

HEBREWS XI. 2.

By faith the elders obtained a good report.

In considering the connexion of this verse with what goes before and follows, a point, which, when a verse is brought into notice by itself, ought almost always to be attended to, it is plain, who were the elders, or at least, who were the principal of those elders, that by their faith obtained a good report, as also what their faith was by which they obtained it, that it was the faith answering to the description given in the first verse, or was the faith giving a substance to the things hoped for, an evidence to the things not seen. These elders are afterwards enumerated; they are even most of them given by name, with also in some of the cases the particulars, that distinguished their faith and shewed it to be such, as was agreeable to that description.

It would be unsuitable in taking up the consideration of the text to enter into the particulars of these cases or of any of them. This would antici-

pate the consideration of the cases themselves, which have each, something in them of importance and worthy of a distinct discussion, are each, so to speak, by themselves a sermon. It is quite suitable to consider in what circumstances these elders generally were, and how by faith they obtained a good report.

From the enumeration of the names that follows in the chapter it appears that these elders were the men of God, who lived before the coming of Christ. They were the Patriarchs, the Preachers, the Prophets; they were the Judges, the Kings, the Warriors, who upheld the cause of God, and stood up for his truth during the old dispensation. They are called the elders because they lived during that period. They are the elder brethren of the Church of Christ, the elder brethren of the Apostles and of the fellow-preachers of the Apostles, and of course, are of the old Church of Christ, which was before his coming. In what circumstances they were during that time may be learned in part from their private history, and in part from the account given of the two visible Churches, they respectively belonged to. As far as the Apostle afterwards notices their private history, we do not, as we have intimated, propose to speak. Of the general circumstances of the Churches they were of, we may; there is in those circumstances a lesson profitable enough; we may read in them the exemplification of faith; we may learn in them how we too, are to believe. Do we believe? If we do, we may from hence in some measure form a judgment of our faith, and what is its nature.

We have just hinted at two ancient visible

Churches, and these are, the Church of the Gentiles, and the Church of the Jews, the latter taken out and separated from the other. For a time indeed there was but one Church, indeed for a long time it was but one, namely, the Church of the Gentiles. For about 2000 years reckoning from the fall it was but one. It was not till the days of Abraham, that a separation was made, that the Church was broken into two parts.

What occasioned the separation or breaking of the Church into two parts is no secret to those, who read the Bible. It plainly had its origin in the extreme corruption, in the far spreading spiritual degeneracy of mankind, in the introduction of idol worship of the most offensive sort, in a species of worship, by which the God of heaven was himself treated as an idol, or was thought no better of than the idols which were placed in the same temple with himself, nay, was even less honoured than those idols, or displaced to make room for them in the very temples, which were built originally for his worship only. That the wickedness of mankind was in other respects very great is also no secret to those, who read the Bible. But then this spiritual degeneracy was the main cause of the division of the Church into two parts. Indeed the spiritual degeneracy had spread such an universal taint, that the very man, who was specially called, Almighty God making this separation his own act and deed, out of the corruptions of the world, out of the corruptions of his neighbours around him; the very man who was selected to lay the foundations of the new Church, and in himself first and in the holy line of *Fathers* after him, to be the head of it on earth,

in a particular corner of the earth, even Abraham himself had fallen into the snare of that spiritual degeneracy, had lapsed into the sin of his neighbours, had yielded to the allurements or terrors of idol worship, had himself become an idolater, or if the Patriarch can be excused from this degeneracy, his family that left home with him when he was called away, had certainly become idolatrous.

In the history of this church previous to the call of Abraham, what a frightful picture do we see of the spiritual corruption of mankind. From the murder of Abel, itself done after sacrifice and originating in a religious principle, up through the time of the apostacy of Cain itself a religious apostacy, and through the time of the followers of Cain, who were his followers religiously so considered, who were disciples of that his religious principle which prompted him to persecute and murder his brother, up through this time to the deluge, what a heart do we discern to have been in man as to his affections for heavenly things, and of course, what extreme degeneracy in his moral and religious practice. Nor after the deluge do we see but for a short season any improvement. The patience and mercy which had been so far exhausted as to save but one small family out of the thousands which dwelt on the earth, was at last reduced to the necessity, so to speak, if the covenant of redemption were ever to be fulfilled in the chosen, to separate one man and his house from the community, that had again peopled the earth. This patience and mercy had promised never again to execute the same judgment by water on the world, and so under this promise, if the other judgment by fire were to be delayed, if the elect of

all times were to be saved, if Christ were to come at all, they were, again so to speak, reduced to the necessity of trying the method of breaking the old Church into two parts, and of erecting one of them into a new Church in a separate and secret place, and of leaving the other part to fill up the measure of its corruptions. The history in the Bible up to the call of Abraham, though it be for two thousand years, is but an epitome, yet short as it so is, it is a history of religious crime. And let those who read it, judge, what under such circumstances must have been the condition of the elders of this time, of those who may be called the patriarchal elders, the elders of the then universal Church, all of it one and the same. Let them judge, what must have been their trials, and what their persecutions begun in the murder of one brother by another envying and hating him for his piety's sake, and even doing the deed not far from his Father's own altar or from the throne of the Cherubim before which the altar stood. Let them reflect, the eldest son of Adam drawing after him a party of the same religious principles with himself, how few in number must have been the good and true worshippers. What wonder, if God took Enoch away out of the furnace. What wonder, if the few, who were faithful, were at times unfaithful, if the grace they had, much less at all times than is given to us, were at times marred with blots. What wonder, if a Noah could sin a wilful sin, if even Abraham afterwards found so courageous and faithful had for a season lost his courage and fidelity. What wonder, if when called, though by a special interview with God, he loitered with his family in his journey to the land he was

told to go to, and even to go to with God for his guide and protector.

If now leaving the Gentile Church to its corruption and darkness, which after the call of Abraham became through the succeeding ages greater and greater, extinguishing nearly every good, and blighting almost every seed of piety and faith that shot up in it, we look to the separate Church, the Church of the Jews, of which Abraham was the founder, what do we there see, but confusion and mistake and blind apostacy extensively prevailing in the very bosom of the Church, and what to the few pious and faithful members but difficulty and trial and persecution sometimes even unto blood! Even if we look at the first generations, at the first three families, which were called by Almighty God in a special way, and visited by him with special favour having almost a personal intercourse with him, we see amongst them much ignorance, much sin. We see them encompassed with idolatrous nations, living as in a camp, fightings without, within fears; we see in the midst of what dangers, and of what treachery both at home and abroad, the hope of the true Church was preserved.

It is impossible to go at length into the history of this Church, indeed it is unnecessary, for the Bible which contains nearly all, that relates to it, is in all our hands. We can all of us readily read in a few pages the account of the Church and nation of Israel, into what deep distress they fell, into what bondage and frightful slavery. We can all read in those pages of what a brutish temper the people were, occasioned no doubt by poverty and ignorance and oppression. We there see, even those who were

chosen by Almighty God for his own nation refusing to be delivered. We there read of the flight and long exile of Moses, who repulsed by the people, he wished to serve, had fled and had become a disappointed wanderer. Even on his success, when we consider the laws and institutions, which under the divine direction he gave to them, what do we then find? Why, we find but few animated with the true spirit of obedience. We find in the people generally nothing but disobedience and suffering, as the fruit of disobedience and then repentance brought about by suffering. We find in their history nothing, but a quick succession of these things, nothing, but disobedience and suffering and penitence, and then again after penitence disobedience, and then again suffering, and then again penitence. This is in short their history for nearly two thousand years. Neither can it be denied of the laws and institutions themselves, especially such, as related to the rites of the Tabernacle and Temple, doubtless the most important part of the code, that, though they were the Gospel to the people, they had themselves much obscurity in them. They were but a dark species of instruction. They taught the Gospel by types, emblems or shadows only. They occasioned likewise much expence much grudged, though they were ordained for the comforts and benefits of religion. They took from the herd and the flock; they took the rich man's lambs and the poor man's pigeons. Must there not be a deep ignorance amongst the worshippers at large as to the use and intent of the Mosaic ceremonies, as to the reference the blood of beasts had to the blood of Christ? How many thousands are there of us Pro-

testants, who in a Church separated from an idolatrous Church have the Gospel in its full glory, who yet understand but little of the principle, they in shew maintain; who are deaf to the use and intent of the sacrifice of Christ. So must it have been with the thousands of Israel. Had there not been amongst them such ignorance and such vice and profaneness the sure offspring of ignorance, they certainly would not have despised, as they did, their Priests; had not their blindness been so great, they would not have rebelled, as they did, against their King, against their God, who was their real King, who calling himself so had set himself over them after the same fashion that earthly Kings are set over the other nations of the earth. Had not such blindness been upon their heart, they would not have rejected as they did, their Preachers and Prophets; they would not have driven them into holes and corners; they would not have forced them to flee to deserts and mountains and dens and caves of the earth; they would not have shed their blood; they would not, as they did, have shed the blood of their last prophet, Jesus Christ.

From this account of the circumstances in which the Elders, who lived before the coming of Christ generally were, both those, who lived when the ancient Church was the Church of the whole world, and those, who lived, when the Jewish Church in its separation took the lead of the other, we come to consider, how by faith they obtained a good report, or in other words how they being witnesses for God and his truth and being so in faith obtained his witness for themselves.

In the account, which follows the text, of the

principal Elders, the Apostle takes notice in some of the instances of the particular testimony God gave to them on one or two remarkable occasions in which their faith was tried. He mentions, how their faith on those occasions was approved and rewarded, how it was distinguished by some special token of honour or of love in the sight of men; he even mentions, how when as soldiers they fought in battle for him, victory was the fruit of their faith.

In the times, in which these Elders lived, it was more usual for their faith to receive temporal distinctions and rewards than it now is. They were not then to have a full insight into the truths of religion or the complete enjoyment of spiritual blessings. They were not then to read their title to heaven quite clear. They had grace given them, but not in the full measure of the Christian dispensation. They were men of God, but not of the full stature of such men. It was not fitting they should be such men: it was not fitting they should be possessed of spiritual priviliges in their greatest abundance, for Christ had not yet died. It was not fitting that types, emblems and shadows, through which God was worshipped, should bring with them clear knowledge, the richest grace or the richest gifts of grace. These were better deferred to the day of Christ, to the day on which the real sacrifice was offered, when God's own Lamb died. Wherefore the reward commonly bestowed on these Elders consisted in great part, of present temporal advantage or distinction. In this way God was pleased commonly to bear testimony to their faith. He blessed the fruit of their labours in the field; he increased their herds and flocks; he gave them a

country for an inheritance; he gave them rest from their persecutors and enemies; sometimes even a sceptre continued in their families for many generations. He gave to Solomon learning and knowledge in books and skill in judgment; he made Abraham the covenanted Father of the faithful, the head of the nation, which sprang from him and even of all other nations unto this day. He made also those, who seemed to suffer the worst and to die without honour, witnesses for his truth and fixed the witness, they gave of it, in the hearts of the proudest or most reprobate of men, even in the heart of an Antiochus or a Nebuchadnezzar. Yet, notwithstanding it thus pleased God to bear testimony to the faith of these Elders in the way of temporal mercies, he did not leave them entirely destitute of spiritual; they, though in much darkness, found the way to heaven; though they had but little knowledge, they saw a light afar off, and though it were afar off, understood its nature.

It is recorded of some of them even in this very chapter, that they desired a heavenly country, that they looked for a heavenly city, that they waited in faith for that future rest, which we under the Gospel also wait for; nay, it is even said of some, that their faith still speaks to us, that it was the same faith as ours, that though it had an emblem or a type only for its object, only a lamb dying before an altar to look at, it was still the faith in the future lamb, the faith in the lamb we believe in, even in Jesus Christ; nay more than this; for of one it is said, that he became heir of the righteousness, which is by faith, of the very same imputed righteousness, which is the glory of the Gospel we read and believe.

If we believe, let us now take up these reflections, if we believe, and to believe is the main thing, indeed is every thing with reference to our title to heaven, God will bear testimony to our faith; he will give testimony to every thing, we do, if done in faith; he will honour first, our faith, then all our works, if faith be in them; he will give an assurance to the heart for the faith of the heart; he will not do to us, who live now after the coming of Christ, as he did to his Elders, who lived before that day; he will not do this because Christ has come, because the Gospel has come, and all the grace of it, and all the gifts of grace; he will not work miracles for us either in providence or grace, as he did for them of the old Gentile and old Jewish Church. We are of the Christian Church, and if we believe, we have the faith of that Church bringing down from heaven itself the Holy Ghost himself, a far more precious blessing than the blessing of a fruitful field, of a rich herd or flock, or even of a golden sceptre. If we who live now, believe, God will give testimony to us in our prayers by warming our heart and loosening our tongue and by filling our heart and tongue with joy *unspeakable and full of glory;* he will give testimony to us, when we are in his house at worship, when we hear the sermon, when we drink in his word, when we baptize our children, when we come to the table on which are placed bread and wine, and when we eat that bread and drink that wine remembering the broken body and spilled blood of Jesus. Then will the Holy Spirit make our bodies his temple.

If we do not believe, let us now take up these other reflections, what testimony will God bear to us? He will bear testimony to our unbelief. If

we do not believe, we are on his authority just as we were in his sight, when born. We were born children of wrath, and, if there were then a promise and a charitable hope for us, that promise and that hope are not for us now, if we believe not now; that wrath, if we believe not now, still abideth on us. Nor is this all the testimony God will bear to our unbelief. He will one day, we remaining unbelievers, bear an open testimony against us. He will speak with a voice; he will call up his justice, he will summon the tormentor to hear his own and our doom; he will publicly bid us *depart accursed into everlasting fire.*

IV.

FAITH CONTEMPLATING THE CREATION.

HEBREWS XI. 3.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

When we read the new Testament, or indeed any book, which has important sentiments in it, it is always proper to consider, besides other things, the reference there is in the mind of the writer to the circumstances of the world around him, or to the times, he lives in. We cannot indeed always arrive at a very distinct knowledge of the circumstances under which a writer writes, but then, when we can, they are not to be neglected. They are not to be neglected as to the text. We have, as to the sentiment there intended to be taught, a pretty clear apprehension of the notions, which then prevailed concerning the creation or origin of the world. In general, opinions on that point were extremely confused. If mankind did any of them think, there was a creator, it was the power of a false, not of the true God, which they adored. If the wise men amongst them inclined to the notion of the true Maker, it was but a doubting

hesitating inclination; it was an opinion, on which they knew not how to speak; they found no sure resting place for their arguments, whilst others, who were also in reputation for wisdom, maintained the universe to be eternal, and to be itself its own God having life in itself.

The Apostle had in the first verse agreeably to its true meaning said, that faith gave an evidence to things not seen, and referring us in the second verse to the earliest history of mankind, to the first fathers of the world, how they by their faith obtained a good report, enjoying really by it the things they did but hope for, and did not see, he in this, which is the text, refers us to the very beginning of time, to the very creation of the world, how God is in that work to be contemplated by faith, the word, which he spake, being his power to create and to give existence to things, which before had none.

The Hebrews, to whom the Epistle is addressed, had generally, notwithstanding their corrupt interpretations of the old Testament, no need to be told concerning the first years of time or the first origin of the world, how at the bidding of God it rose up to view having before no existence, but then, as the Epistle, though in its title and in some leading points it was addressed to them, was still ultimately designed for others, who had lost the record and were a benighted race, there was great need for the sake of these others that mention should be made of that point concerning the first origin of the world, and both had equal need, the Hebrews as well as the Gentiles, to be told of the use that was to be made of that point, when they contemplated God in the act of creating, in the very first

act, in which he was revealed. They had both also the same need to be told, that every meditation concerning God was to be in faith, that the very first meditation they could have concerning him in first creating the world, was to be in faith.

What the Gentiles thought or believed concerning God, we need not say; we know well enough, how perplexed and blind they were; but the Hebrews, who kept the record of Moses, were generally not for faith; they were for ceremony, and the observance of ceremony; their sentiments which directed them to the contemplation of God, were on the side of pride and arrogance and self-conceit and self-righteousness; they were generally, for works, not for faith. It was on this account necessary, that they, as well as the others, should be instructed in the true primary doctrine having its origin, even when God first condescended to come down from his everlasting habitation in order to create. It was on this account necessary that they should be taught, as well as the others, how all things derived, each, themselves, and all they are, from God, how all were jointly and severally at the word of God bidden to be and to live, how dependence on God is from the very first every thing to all and to each.

The Hebrews were not without right notions amongst them concerning the nature or the character of the Christ, whom they expected. They were not without such notions, because they had the old Testament amongst them, and because they had always had amongst them even in the worst and most degenerate times true interpreters, though these were but few compared with the many false. But then these notions were at this time greatly debased

amongst them or were next to lost. There was indeed a small party, who when Christ came, received him, as he came, but then in the thoughts of most there was the expectation, approaching in its nature to a dream, of his being an earthly conqueror, a King, such as this world pays allegiance to. What he were besides, as far as we can judge, they neither knew nor cared. If he would but have a throne on earth, and set his nation above other nations, they would be content, and would own him. There was therefore great need of reviving amongst them the true notion of the Redeemer of Israel, and in awakening them to the contemplation of God, as the creator, and in telling them, this was to be in faith a language which could in strictness apply only to God, as their Redeemer, of thus teaching them, that he who was the creator, was at the same time, the Redeemer. They had amongst them the true notion, that it was the Word, the Word of God, the second Person of the Trinity, who was the creator of the world. Wherefore the Apostle in bidding them, as in the text he does, to contemplate the creator in faith, manifestly intends to direct them to that second Person of the Trinity, who is our and their true Christ. We are not indeed to think, that the expressions *the word of God*, which are in the text, describe that Word, we speak of, that second Person of the Trinity, the Redeemer. These expressions mean only the command or bidding of God the creator, speaking as if with the human voice and calling the universe into being. But we are to lay the stress on the term *God* in the text, and specially on the direction given to contemplate him, while speaking the world into being, in faith, and from

that term and that direction taken together, we learn, what those, the Apostle writes to, were to learn, that that second Person of the Trinity under that view of him is the Christ both of the Jew and the Gentile, to be always under every character in which he appears in the old Testament contemplated in faith, to be always under his varied titles, offices and operations looked to for the special benefits and blessings promised to faith, to be looked to for forgiveness, for justification, and salvation.

We took notice in a former part of this discourse of an use to be made of that point in the text, that is, of the creation by the word of God of the world having before no existence. We did not then say, what it was; we only intimated, there was an use which those, to whom the Apostle writes, as well the others for whose benefit he also writes, had need to be told of. And the use is this, that the creation in nature by the word of God, the old creation, is to be considered as the emblem of the new creation in the Spirit in which by the word of the Gospel and by faith thence derived spiritual and heavenly blessings, though only hoped for, and not seen, rise up to view, as things having a real existence, having a substance, having a certain evidence in them. As to the natural eye the universe not before appearing became on creation visible and palpable, so to the mental eye by faith spiritual and heavenly blessings become really existing. As the former work of God is not to be doubted of, so neither is this latter work of his; to faith this latter is quite as sure a work, as the other.

Doubtless it was greatly for the comfort of the Hebrew Christians, that their reading of the first

chapter of Genesis which they had in their hands, should have this turn given to it, that they were to find in the remarkable history there given this moral, that their contemplation of the Son of God, as he appears there, should be thus aided and improved by this representation of the power of their faith in him. To them this representation would have a peculiar sweetness in it, and would shed a glory over that page, to which they were so much accustomed. For us indeed it ought to have a sweetness in it, and we ought too, to see in it a glory, where we see the glory of the Son of God, but then to them it was peculiarly sweet, because they were surrounded by doubting, infidel wise men publicly teaching opinions contrary to the name and honour of the true Maker of the world, and by Jews, their own Hebrew brethren, who read the same page with themselves, but who publicly also disowned Him, who was the glory of that page, the true Son of God, their Christ. Still, however, we may take comfort in this representation of the power of faith. We too learn hence the wonderful work of God in the Gospel of his Son. We too learn hence, how our regeneration may be aptly compared to a new creation, and that it is a sure operation of God on the soul; we too, learn hence, how our Christianity has a substance in it, a certain evidence in it, how the gift of grace, and the next gift after that, the gift of glory are real gifts from heaven. Do we doubt these gifts? If we doubt them, are we Christians? We wear the garb of Christians. Shall we then doubt these gifts?

We may add in the way of conclusion, nor shall it be unsuitable, that the descent of the Son of God in order to create, being his first condescension from

his high and happy state, may be considered as an indication, that he would do further acts of condescension, if the necessity of the case, in which this our lower world might hereafter be, should require them. We know that the necessity of the case did afterwards require those acts, and we know, that the Son of God did afterwards further condescend.

When therefore we contemplate him in his work of creation, if that page recording that work be ever before us, if we ever do contemplate our Creator with the faith we have with the Apostle on our side described, we may look up to him as by that work pledged in love to redeem us, as pledged in love not to allow the vessels, which he the mighty potter made, to be all of them broken to pieces and lie in ruin.

We have, let us now say to ourselves, the Son of God for our Maker; we remember, what St. John says, *without him was not any thing made, that was made.* Let us then consider what is before our view on this point, nor let us forget it. Our Maker is our Christ. Let us consider, whether we receive him, as such. We bear his name. Let us consider, whether that name be justly ours. Some will say perhaps, that they believe in him. But then they are to try and prove their faith by its effects or fruits, and amongst others, let them select these to try and prove it with. Does religious meditation occupy any portion of their time or thoughts? We do not say, it is to occupy all their time, or all their thoughts. There is employment for their hands, there are the labours and offices of life to attend to, but then, that employment done with, those labours and offices over, do they, if we may so speak, come back from

those works to God, as to their resting place, as to their home? If they say, they do, let them further enquire, whether their meditations be such, as the Bible suggests. If their faith be such as the Bible requires, they will be governed by the Bible; they will not be governed by their own philosophy, or by such, as old heathen philosophers handled, or by such, as strange to tell, we hear of even amongst ourselves, by the philosophy, which prates of the book of nature, as the only book for man, which in the Creator, who by philosophers is falsely said to be in nature revealed, sees and acknowledges no Christ as Redeemer.

Let their faith also be further tried by this criterion. The criterion is agreeable to what we have said. It is agreeable to the text and context, and there at least, they see, that if they have true faith, it causes spiritual and heavenly blessings to become to them a reality. We are not to be understood to mean a speculative, or a future reality. They become we mean to say, a present reality; they have a substance now. Let them then consider, whether they have reasonable grounds for saying, that they have an interest in the atonement and blood of Jesus Christ. Forgiveness of sins in this life is a sure fruit of faith. Let them then consider, whether they be already forgiven. The gift of grace, the gift of the Spirit is a sure fruit in this life of faith. Let them then consider, whether this gift be theirs, whether their regeneration by that grace be at this time, be now, while they walk up and down in the world engaged in the concerns of it, clear in their present hopes and expectations, in their present manners, temper, and words; let them consider, whether these blessings be to them present realities.

V.

THE FAITH OF ABEL.

HEBREWS XI. 4.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

In the story of the two brothers Cain and Abel, of whom the younger was murdered by the elder, it is related, that after the murder the blood of him, that was murdered, did as by a voice, cry unto God for vengeance. In this sense the younger being dead spake.

In the passage chosen for the text is a manifest allusion to this part of the story, to that cry of blood, to that speaking of him, who was dead. Changing the sentiment the Apostle says, that by his faith Abel being dead speaketh, and, as if his speaking so were for a perpetual lesson, he says, *yet speaketh*.

Wherefore on the authority of this perpetual lesson here recorded to be such, it is suitable enough for us to consider, what this faith of Abel was.

The Apostle in another part of his writings says, that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the

word of God, that faith cometh by instruction in the word of God, which the Apostle calls, hearing it; hearing instruction in public being in the Apostle's days, the principal, the common mode of learning, at least, for adult persons. And doubtless, the two brothers had been instructed by their parents in the duty, they owed to God; doubtless, they had been both taught how to worship him, how to worship him by offerings and by sacrifice. We say doubtless, the two brothers had been thus taught, and we say also by their parents, for, though nothing be said in the history concerning this teaching by the parents, yet, if it were not God himself who had taught the children, who but these parents, could teach, or who could teach, like these parents, a pair, who had been in the most extraordinary situation, and had seen the most extraordinary things, and concerning whom also it may be safely said from the intimations given in the history, that, though they had fallen for themselves and for their race, they had for themselves obtained forgiveness, and in their exile had faith in God looking to him for consolation, a circumstance over and above their natural love powerfully binding them to the right education and care of their children?

We said, these two brothers had been taught by their parents to worship God by offerings and by sacrifice, for, though learned men have argued, as if there were in man a faculty capable of discovering God, and even of discovering a mode of worship, which, as they will say, for at least the gratitude that appears in it, shall be acceptable, even a mode of worship, not by offerings of fruits only, but by a bloody sacrifice, we shall not scruple to maintain

against these learned men, that there is in man no such faculty capable of discovering God, that men do not know even the existence of God, but from being told of it, either by God himself, which was the case with Adam and Eve, or by others, which is the case nearly of all their posterity, and consequently we cannot scruple to maintain against these learned men, that the faculty, which is incapable of that discovery, must be incapable also of the other, must be incapable of discovering the mode of worship, which is acceptable to God; we confidently say, that men know nothing of that, which will please God, but as they are told it. How could they discover, we ask, that a bloody sacrifice, a rite having in it death, against which all animal nature revolts, both the sacrificer and the victim, how could they discover, that a death, to procure and evidence which blood must be spilled all around, should be acceptable, but from being told so either by God himself, or by others speaking and teaching for him in his name.

If this be so, how ought we to value the sacred book we have amongst us, the volume so large and of so much instruction, the Bible, that has come from heaven and that was written by men inspired of God so to write and to write so much! How ought we to value the public ordinances of the Church established amongst us, in which there is so much intercession and prayer and so much useful public teaching! How ought we to prize those records and archives of the Church, in which the faith is kept, as in a treasure-house for to be handed down from father to son through many generations! How ought we to esteem that order of men, who are set apart to preach

and to teach, and who, that they may be set apart, have a revenue, not commonly any great matter for their maintenance! How ought we, if they care for us, to care also for their comfort and honour! If we were to lose our Bible and our teachers, we might lose, as some nations now in darkness through corruption and spiritual degeneracy have done, the very name of God itself.

But to return; the two brothers appeared before God with their offerings, Cain with his, which was composed of the fruits of the earth, and Abel with his, which was of the firstlings of his flock. They appeared before God each with the offering suited to his condition in life, for Cain was a tiller of the ground, and Abel a shepherd. They appeared before God each in obedience to the will of God, which had taught them to bring offerings. They came each assenting to revelation, each with the faith, which is called Assent. They came each with the offering, which was an acknowledgment of the licence given them to use the products of nature, and of the care of Providence providing them for their use. So far their conduct was alike; and so far their motives and their faith were the same. But then the motives and faith of the elder brother went no further than this. His offering had no respect to the moral character of the offerer. His offering was such, as might have been offered in Paradise, when there was no consciousness of sin or defect in the offerer, when the offerer was, as God first made him, perfect and innocent. His offering was indeed the offering of thankfulness, but then this was but the thankfulness for the licence to take of the fruits of the earth, a licence, which had been granted in Paradise; his

thankfulness was but the gratitude to the Providence of the Maker and Provider, which had itself been seen in Paradise. It had in it no sense of ill desert. It could not have such a sense in it. It could not from its very nature afford a criterion of such a sense. It could not be appealed to, as giving tokens of sorrow or of suffering, as giving tokens of what the offerer was to feel in unison in some sort, with the expression in the offering. Certainly the fruits of the earth, when presented, after they are gathered, in acknowledgment of the licence to gather, manifest no such expression. Even if the gathering should seem like suffering, yet as the offering is but the offering of a part for the privilege of gathering all the offering is of course after the privilege. It has nothing to do with even that semblance of suffering.

Thus it was with the offering of Cain. From the offering, however, of the shepherd we learn a further lesson. His besides its being the offering of like thankfulness with Cain's, had respect also to the moral character of the offerer. He brought a lamb out of the flock, which he reared and lived by; he brought it, as a part of his substance, as his brother had brought the fruits of the ground, but he brought it also that it might bleed and die; he brought it to express sorrow and suffering by it, and he put it to pain and to death, as betokening that he himself deserved the pain and the death; he spilled its blood in evidence of the extremity of its pain in dying and of the certainty of its death and in evidence also of his own deserving of the like extreme and sure doom. The shepherd brought the lamb, which he had not the privilege of killing, but for this pur-

pose, and the shepherd put his sins, his own sins on the innocent, and the innocent, the lamb that had no sins, bled for the sins of the shepherd.

The shepherd had fallen; he was the child of fallen parents; he had lost his goodness; he had no goodness to trust to; he trusted in the atonement made by the substitute; he had faith in it. Being a sinner he had nothing left but reliance on the mediating sacrifice. He had not the hard heart of Cain, the confident bold heart of him, who had no need of the offering of blood, who was righteous in his own estimation. Abel had faith, and was pardoned. Abel had faith and obtained the righteousness of faith, the righteousness, to use the language of the Gospel, which is of God by faith. God testified of his gifts, that he was righteous, and his gifts were sacrifice, and his faith was his reliance on the sacrifice.

Some learned men have thought, that Cain brought a single offering only, the offering only of the fruits of the earth, while Abel brought two, one like to Cain's of fruits, and another the firstling of his flock for expiation. And they think their criticism to be warranted by the text, as if the more excellent sacrifice as it is given in the text were better rendered from the original, the fuller or more abundant sacrifice.

They will also add, that the sacrifice of Abel is spoken of, as *gifts*. But then, to take the latter criticism first, that Abel's sacrifice is called *gifts*, refers only to his repeating the sacrifice, to his practice in sacrificing after his manner; and, as to the other criticism, not to mention other objections, such, as the silence in the passage of the old Testament, it is, as we have seen, unnecessary. The lamb

of Abel was, as we have seen, his double offering; it was his offering of thankfulness, like his brother's; it came from his flock, being a part of his wealth, as the fruits came from the store of the brother; but Abel's was also his offering of atonement, and, in this way, as we have also seen, it was more abundant than the brother's, and more excellent.

After explaining, what the faith of Abel was, it might seem to be required of us to shew, how his sacrifice had respect to the future sacrifice of Christ, to which our description plainly directed it. But then though this were a reasonable requisition, it would not suit this occasion. We may be contented to refer to the text, and, taking the proof there for one out of several, to say, that, if Abel by his faith *yet* speaketh, though dead, that is, if he, though dead in the first years of the world, *yet* speaketh in the last, under the Christian dispensation, after Christ has died, his faith must be substantially the same, as the faith of us, who believe now; his faith in his sacrifice must be as our faith in our sacrifice; his faith in his lamb, that bled by his hand, must be as our faith in our lamb, whom we by our Gentile forefathers slew, in our Christ, on whom we put our sins, the sins, which caused him to bleed. Were it not so, his faith could not *yet* speak, could not still be a lesson to us.

That this is an important lesson cannot be doubted. Let us listen to it. It is a lesson worth attending to for the sake of the profit, which is in it.

One thing at least I may venture to inculcate, which is this, that there may be a great difference as to the feelings of the heart, we each of us have in our bosoms in matters of religion. With our dress,

with our manners pretty much alike, we may still differ widely, as to what is within, or seems to be within each of us, I mean, as to our faith. We may appear before the same altar, as we have seen in the case of the two brothers, with very different hearts. There may be, as we have heard, offerings without the true faith; there may be prayer without the breathing of true desire; there may be prayer on the lip, while below there is a hard, selfish, self-righteous heart.

This lesson runs on thus. There may be even brothers, brought up on the same lap, baptized at the same font, fed at the same table, and of the same school, and of joint hopes as to this world, who yet may not be akin in their faith. They may not here be brethren; they may not be alike children of God; they may not be alike heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

If this be a lesson for all, yet it may be a lesson special for parents, painful indeed for them, but instructive. It will teach them to moderate their hopes of their children. It will teach them, while they survey so wistfully the case of the family, to bow to the will of God, to resign the family to Him, who distributes blessing and curse, who calls and saves according to his own pleasure. To God always let us all bow. *Amen.*

VI.

THE FAITH OF ENOCH.

HEBREWS XI. 5.

By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God.

THE event recorded in the text is of so extraordinary a sort, being contrary to the course of nature, that it may for its own sake, for the miracle's own sake, be deserving of our consideration. The Patriarch did *not see death*. But when we reflect, that the event is connected with faith, that the faith of the Patriarch paved the way to that event, it becomes still more worthy of attention. We see a mortal so called because he is to die, through faith not dying, as others; we see him through faith escaping one painful curse, the last curse of our existence here, the last and often the most painful, often too, the most alarming woe of all our woes here; we see him through faith after acceptance taken in the habiliments of the flesh, poor clothing, as we all know, into everlasting glory, into Paradise the seat of bliss.

The history is too brief, taking in all the places,

where the Patriarch is spoken of, to furnish us with all the particulars, which curiosity might wish to have on this subject. But then, perhaps, we may be aided in our serious reflections by considering, that in the first ages of the world, and indeed throughout the whole time of the ancient dispensation, through the time of the Patriarchs and the time of the Jews up to the coming of Christ, Almighty God kept up a communion with his favoured servants very much after the manner of a personal intercourse; that his interviews with them were like to personal interviews, he sometimes appearing in the form of an Angel on plain ground, on the same level with them, and sometimes, as on a throne brought down from heaven and placed on earth with cherubim beneath supporting the throne. We may perhaps, be further aided in our serious reflections by considering, that, as these interviews between God and man were so much of a personal nature, they would have in them, as we know they certainly had, the same things as happen in personal converse between man and man. There would be the frown of rebuke and words of chiding; there would be bursts of anger, even of angry fiery vengeance. There would also be, and more often, tokens and memorials of affection, and as the Angel was the Mediator, and as the throne, when he was there, was the Mediator's throne, there would also be bursts of love. And why not the embrace of love, the embrace held amongst men to be the principal the most certain token of love? But then, what, in this case, would the embrace be? what else, we can in this case think of nothing else, but the immediate trans-

lation of the beloved believer into the Mediator's own dwelling place, to the Mediator's own throne?

What, we may here pause to ask, must the faith of the Patriarch have been to have obtained so great a favour! What must it have been for him to be thus taken away from earth in the embrace, in the full overflowing love of God! We are to die; we are surely to die; there is no such event now, as this we are speaking of; there can be no such event now; we are now to be under the same law, as the Mediator himself, who having come from heaven returned by no other way, than through the gate of death; we can now only go to heaven through the same gate, through which he went; but for our consolation, if we go through that gate having faith in him, we shall be met at it and shall be taken away in the embrace, in the full overflowing love of God as surely as the believing Patriarch was. It is impossible to determine with exactness the circumstances, in which Enoch was, or the state of the times, in which he lived. The shortness of the account, which is given by Moses, forbids that. Nor is the enquiry greatly assisted by the other accounts. Yet perhaps, something may be made out from these and other sources.

It appears from the account given by Moses, that the translation of Enoch took place not a long while before the birth of Noah. And from the account of that birth it appears, that Lamech his father called him by that name, saying, *This same shall comfort us*, expressions, which pretty plainly indicate, that the holy family, the holy line, to which Enoch and Noah belonged, was on the birth of Noah in circumstances

of much distress by reason of the wickedness, which prevailed around. That in the days of Noah himself wickedness prevailed to the greatest extent, we knew from the special judgment inflicted on the world for that reason, from the deluge, which drowned the world. But then, as a special judgment is not inflicted, but when men are by extreme, by insufferable wickedness ripe for it, and particularly, such a judgment, as an universal drown of men and beasts, it may be reasonably concluded, that in the days of Enoch, though the wickedness of men had not arrived at its greatest height, it was still exceedingly great.

It is said in the book of Ecclesiasticus, that "Enoch was translated being an example of repentance to all generations," and, though this book be not of equal value with our canon, being not an inspired book, yet, as it is of much estimation amongst Jewish records, this account of the Patriarch throws some light on the circumstances, in which he was. He was either himself an example of repentance, a singular example of deep repentance, as the Apostle says, he was of faith, or his translation was an example, a warning to men to repent, in either of which cases, and particularly in the latter, we plainly learn that mankind were then in a most hardened and impenitent state.

It is said in the Epistle of St. Jude, that Enoch was a prophet or a preacher, and, concerning what did he prophesy or preach? Why, concerning the future judgment. In the very first years of the world he preached concerning the judgment to come, and against whom did he denounce that judgment? Why, against the ungodly, against the ungodly sin-

ners. And for what? Why, for their ungodly deeds and their hard speeches, let us remark those words, for their hard speeches.

Nor is the designation of these sinners of these days general only. They are pointed out, who they are, even by name. They are they, *who*, as St. Jude describes, *have gone in the way of Cain*. The way of Cain was not then forgotten. It was surely not his murder, which mankind followed. That could not be a principle, that could not be a way, for men to copy after. It was surely the religious principle of Cain, that was not then forgotten. It was Cain's self-righteousness and impenitence, that men copied after, and against which Enoch preached. They were the children of Cain, not literally so, but his religious children, the heirs of his religious principle, who were the doers of the ungodly deeds, and who made the hard speeches, upon which the judgment denounced was to be executed.

What St. Jude tells us of the subject of Enoch's preaching, and of the persons against whom it was directed, may with the other accounts satisfy us, as to the spiritual degeneracy of the times, in which the Patriarch lived. Nor can we doubt, but that his faith by this spiritual degeneracy around him was put to the most severe test. Nor can we also doubt, but that his faith so tried, so brightened by the furnace, it was in, was peculiarly acceptable to God. Nor can we further doubt, but that of his faith made so bright, so pure, even as gold by the fire, he received this distinguishing reward, to be taken away immediately from earth from amongst the men he lived with. After walking with God, an expression, which proves the stedfastness of his

faith, he received the principal token, that can be given by God, of affection and love; he became the object of the burst of his love, and from earth he living passed to heaven; he passed from earth to heaven, as men go from one apartment in a house to another.

It is to our purpose, or, at least, it tends to confirm our reflections on this subject, to mention the case of Elijah, the only other case given in the Bible of a like living translation to heaven with that of Enoch. It tends to confirm our reflections, to observe, how that prophet also lived in disastrous times, as to the state of religion in the country where he was; how he complained, so few in number were those, who feared God, of being left alone; and, though the complaint was a mistake corrected out of pity to his suffering feelings, yet how small the number mentioned was, when compared with the thousands of Israel. It tends to confirm our reflections, to observe, how tried his faith was, and how the more tried, because there was a shew of religion amongst the people, because the very Kings of the country governed, though they were apostates, in the name of God, as the very Vicegerents of Jehovah, their and the people's own King, and because the very Priests, who served in the temple, served there, though they were idolaters also, deriving their title and claim to the priesthood from that of Aaron himself. It tends to confirm our reflections on the case of Enoch, to observe, how the faith of Elijah also triumphed over every obstacle; how faithful he was, as a prophet; how he bore testimony, undismayed against the apostacy and idolatry of the People, the Priests, the Princes, the

Kings. Nor can we doubt but that as in the case of the other prophet, his faith so tried and so brightened received the like distinguishing reward, the like principal token, God can give, of affection and love. We cannot doubt but that his triumphal entry into heaven was the special burst of God's love, and the reward of the triumph of his faith. This prophet, we plainly read, went up from earth publickly to the very throne of God on the back of the Cherubim; he went up to it on the very wheels of fire, on which that throne moved.

It is remarked by one learned man, that the account of the translation of Enoch is obscure, and especially, when compared with the translation of Elijah. It is true, that the former account is short. But it is not, what short accounts sometimes are; it is not obscure. It is plainly expressed; *God took him; he was not, for God took him.* It is also plainly expressed by St. Paul, who interprets the very words of Moses; *God translated him.* It is so expressed in the very original which we render *translate* and which can have no other meaning, than the actual removal by God of the person alive from earth to heaven. It is also true, that the account of the translation of Elijah gives the very vehicle, he was translated in. This last is certainly a more full, or more minute account. But then the other plainly designates the special act, the special interference of God. *God took him;* which is emphatically repeated by St. Paul; *God translated him.* We cannot doubt from the account we have of the throne of God, on which he was used to appear to the ancient Patriarchs and Prophets to receive their worship and to hold converse with them, that that

hrone was in being in the days of Enoch. It was the very throne placed by the gate of Paradise after the expulsion of Adam. And such being the case, it is much more like an interpreter to explain the removal of Enoch by the removal of Elijah, than to shape an argument from the particulars detailed in one against the other, as if this other were obscure, because those particulars are omitted, though the special interference of God is in this other stated.

It is much more like an interpreter to find in Enoch's walking with God, in his acceptance, as stated by St. Paul, and in his preaching, as stated by St. Jude, the disclosure of a future state in the time of Enoch, though the miracle, which took him away, were done in secret, than to make out in the time of Elijah a mere dawning of a future state in the miracle, which took him away, though it were a miracle done in public. What Moses omitted he did not purposely conceal. If what Moses omitted was unknown to him, it was not unknown to Enoch, who preached it, or to the people, to whom he preached it. The age, in which Enoch lived, both the Preacher and the people, could not, on the authority of St. Jude, be unacquainted with a future state. Wherefore, if what Moses omitted, was known to him, he omitted it either for brevity's sake, or because it was not necessary to tell so familiar a matter. It was not omitted on any such principle as this writer would undesignedly make the omission of Moses almost to be, on any such principle, as, if this writer's notion were just, would so much resemble, what is vulgarly by us called Priestcraft. However, these sentiments of this learned man, as they are now and probably always

were in no great estimation, so are they, so plain is the mistake, that is in them, but little worthy of attention. We cannot doubt, that the Patriarch, we are speaking of, did not for his faith's sake *see death*, and so extraordinary an event as that is certainly worthy of attention. It cannot but have in it a lesson for us to mind.

We before intimated, that there is now in these our days no such event, as that, that there can be now no such event. Such events having in them the nature of miracles, were, like other miracles, for dark or degenerate times, when the character of God was but partially and imperfectly displayed, when his wrath against mankind was not greatly abated, when for his wrath's sake he hid himself, so to speak, from them. They were to awaken in men, who heard or read of them, a sense of the power of God, a sense of his majesty and goodness, which would produce terror, and through terror faith and obedience.

We live in better days, in lightsome times. The anger of God is now greatly abated; his Son has died; and there is now a plenteousness of grace, a sufficiency of light and love for every purpose, for faith, and for duty. But then, though this be our lot, such events thus to be read of in the Bible do still tell us, what faith can do; they yet speak, how great is the blessing of faith.

To that blessing let us now, who are surely to die, direct our thoughts. The faith of the Gospel is a bright, is a clear faith. Is it not? Jesus Christ has been set forth crucified amongst us. Has he not? Jesus has in the sight of Angels and men conquered the world, the flesh, and the devil. Has he not?

Jesus has gone down to the grave before us. Has he not! Jesus has ascended into Heaven before us. Has he not? Has he not made a bright track for us to follow him in, and is not the beam of the Holy Ghost on that track! There is no need of a chariot of fire, or of Angels' wings. The promise now, is; the thing, which is wanted now, is; Believe and be saved; Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved; Believe, and *all things are yours. Whether the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours.* Believe, and *ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*

VII.

TWO OBJECTS IN THE CONTEMPLATION OF FAITH.

HEBREWS xi. 6.

But without faith it is impossible to please him. For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

THE first thing that may be remarked on these words, is this, that they have very much the appearance of being occasioned by the account in the preceding verse of the faith of one of the ancient patriarchs. They seem to be almost a conclusion drawn from that account. *By faith Enoch,* who is the patriarch referred to, *was translated that he should not see death; and was not found because God had translated him, for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him.*

Whether the Apostle in the description, which he next gives of faith in this verse, alludes in it to the circumstances of Enoch, cannot certainly be said. It is however, not improbable he did. The description has in it more of the old Testament style, than of the new. It is not the full or exact evangelical

description. It does but at best contain a part, though an important part, of that description, and certainly when we consider the circumstances of Enoch, it may well be thought to be adapted to them. The patriarch was removed from the earth but a short time before the birth of Noah, and we are sure, that at the time of his birth wickedness and degeneracy had made great inroads amongst men. Nor when we look into the Epistle of St. Jude, can we doubt, what sort of sinners they were, even in the days of Enoch himself. We may there see that in addition to an almost universal apostacy they had a proud scoffing infidelity amongst them, unhappily too like to what prevails amongst ourselves, that they were stubborn in their deeds of wickedness, and stubborn in their speeches against God. When therefore the Apostle referring to Enoch's pleasing God by his faith adds, *for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,* it is not improbable, as we said, he refers here to the peculiar exercise or act of the patriarch's faith. It may well enough be thought, he means indirectly to refer us to Enoch as maintaining amidst a world denying or scoffing at the true God his belief in that God, and as expecting a reward for his perseverance and courage in his faith.

We have not ventured, as will be recollected, positively to say concerning this description of faith, that it has reference to the circumstances of Enoch, for though it have in it rather the strain of the old Testament than of the new, and though it be not the full or exact evangelical description, yet the

part, the important part, to which we refer, as being in it, has an application sufficiently instructive to Gospel times, and Gospel circumstances. And doubtless, even for such instruction's sake, it shall be quite allowable to use the language under the Gospel. Indeed under the Gospel, even that part of it, which may seem at the first sound of the words to have the least use, is still necessary. When it is said we are to believe in the existence of the true God, or *that he is*, which might almost seem unnecessary to be said under the Gospel, it will still be found on a near inspection of the case, that there is a necessity for its being, even then, said.

Before the Gospel the knowledge of the existence of the true God was nearly lost. The world indeed had not lost the name, but they had lost the true notion, which as much removed him out of their understandings, as if they had lost the name itself. In their worship of false gods they arrived at no certainty concerning the true; even where they blended the worship of the true with the false, which was sometimes the case, they still came no nearer to the knowledge of the true, for he was but as one of the false; he was at the best but on a level with them; he was only, what the false were. Doubtless, there was before the Gospel a pressing necessity for faith in the true God. But then, as has been hinted, there is a necessity for it, even now. There is the same necessity, as before the Gospel, in all those countries, where the like idolatry prevails, as anciently did, or in all those, which after they had known the true God through the

Gospel, have lapsed into the worship of idols. There is also a necessity amongst ourselves, though it be not so urgent, as in the other cases.

Amongst us is a reigning sentiment become so by its being invented by learned and speculative men, and by its being also maintained and upheld by learned and pious preachers of the Gospel. Which sentiment is this, that mankind are able by the exercise of their reason to make out the existence of the true God, and that they have so made it out; and further than this, that they do also make it out by the glory and power, which appear in the universe, which he has created, and even further than this, that the Scripture does itself warrant this opinion.

It is hardly perhaps, allowable for me to set my single wit and judgment in opposition to this notion, especially as it is maintained by so numerous a company of pious and able men. But then, if I do indeed know a proof of the falsehood of this sentiment in all its parts, both in its appeal to reason and to Scripture, it is incumbent on me, whatever I may be, to speak out plainly, and say, that this sentiment is altogether false. I have aforetime* given the proof, and on that as well as on other accounts it cannot now be given. But then, if that proof be true, which fully settles the matter, that the knowledge of the very being of God can come from revelation only, how necessary it is even for us, who live in Gospel times, and especially if there be another sentiment on this point extensively prevalent amongst us, to be told, that we are, if we come to God, to receive in faith the knowledge of his very

* See the Sermon on *the Baptism of Infants and on Education.*

being, that the elements of our faith, so to speak, are in this knowledge, that the existence of God may justly have a place in the description of faith, such at least as suits the times of the old Testament.

In the days of the Apostle there was no such sentiment as this, we speak of as being general amongst ourselves, and therefore we cannot say, he had here any respect to it. The learned men of those days used their reason better on this point than the learned men of ours. Indeed there were a few amongst them, who thought that the being of God itself could be known only by a voice from heaven, and though those, who reasoned upon the point, came to a more correct conclusion, which is itself however a false sentiment, than our learned men have done, who have reasoned on the same principles, as they did, yet to that false sentiment, which is contained in their more correct conclusion, is here also no respect had. But then we cannot omit remarking, in order that we may learn the value of the Scripture, that there is to this false sentiment so prevalent among ourselves in these latter days a corrective applied long before the sentiment arose, in these plain, simple and peremptory expressions of the Text, that *he that cometh to God must believe that he is*. We are here peremptorily referred to revelation for even that part of our faith, the knowledge of the being of the true God, and, if of his being, then of course, of his nature or essence, his mode of existence, and his attributes.

Of the other clause, on which we are now to speak, in the description of faith given in the text, we have to say, that though like the former, it seems to carry us back to ancient times, it will still bear, perhaps, even more distinctly than the other, an

instructive application to the times of the Gospel. Under the ancient economy indeed, taking it even from the first birth of the world, from which birth it is always in strictness to be dated, Almighty God had the character, and sustained the office of a King after the fashion of an earthly King, even making the government of such a King a model for himself. He was accustomed as such a King is, to deal out present temporal punishments and present temporal rewards. He punished the disobedient with present judgment and misfortune, and rewarded the obedient with present protection, or present honours and advantages. Though however, this were then the case, and though such being the case, there be here an allusion to it, yet under the new economy he is still the rewarder of those who diligently seek him, and we if we have the true faith, justly believe him to be so. He is not now the governor of mankind after the fashion of an earthly King; he has now no such model of a governor before him. He has now dropped the character and laid aside the office of such a King. All nations are each, alike the subjects of the new economy. God has not now under his special sway any particular family or any chosen generation. He is not now the God of the Jews only; he is equally as of them the God of the Gentiles. He is now no respecter of persons. But then to those who under this new economy diligently seek him there is whosoever or wheresoever they be, a reward, a sure nay a better reward than even to any one of the most pious of the ancient chosen generation. The most pious, the most faithful of those generations had a blessing for his vineyard for his field and for his

flock: he had an overflowing winepress, an overflowing garner, and his sheep in their scores upon the hills, but then, though he had religious knowledge, it was but as the first light of the dawn of morning; though he had grace, it was but a scanty supply, scarcely sufficient to preserve him from the worship of stocks and stones; though he knew the promise of life, he knew it but as a man knows the object he sees afar off in the bounds of a remote horizon. Whereas now to those, who under the Gospel diligently seek God, the knowledge which is given as the reward, is as the meridian light of the sun shewing all the brightness and all the glory of heaven. Though there be now an unequal distribution in the world of temporal good and evil, though there be one lot to the righteous and unrighteous, the same lot of uncertainty and solicitude as to their temporal state and temporal hopes, though even to the wicked there may seem to be a larger share of honour and wealth, than to the good, yet this point has now no embarrassment in it. Such an irregularity or such an inequality did startle the good of the ancient times. They lived under another sort of government, and expected another sort of distribution, but now under the Gospel they, who diligently seek God, know better than to feel or express surprize; they know better than to repine and complain; they have made an approach in their knowledge of God to the light ineffable in which he dwells; they have tasted of the joy *unspeakable and full of glory:* they know distinctly, that the future reward of heaven is a sure and an adequate reward to their faith.

To those also, who now under the Gospel dili-

gently seek God, the grace which is given as a reward, is as a panoply; it is as the equipment of a complete armour; it is provided for attack and defence nor is it given in a scanty measure for either. It brings with it zeal to do good works with; it does not crouch before superstition or her votaries; it puts forth the spear of truth to touch hypocrisy with, and to make her start up into her real form, and shew how hideous she is; it does not fly to the retreat of the cavern to hide herself in out of the sight of the temple or of the worshippers of Baal or of Mammon, be they ever so numerous; it now makes the believer in Christ *a good soldier of Christ,* capable of hardship, and of standing without fear in the evil day. The grace which is now given, brings with it virtues of every name; it brings with it love; it knows nothing now of the system, in which an eye is to be taken for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; it brings with it no curse for an enemy, not even for the public open enemy of God, not even for the secret or open betrayer of Jesus Christ; it brings with it the free forgiveness of wrongs. It brings likewise with it acquiescence and patience under afflicting dispensations, whether they be within or without our doors. It is sufficient for prosperity; it is sufficient for adversity. It will not use prosperity to gain more of the world or its favour with: it will not cherish bad rich men; it will not follow the maxims of bad great men. It will be no partner in their oppressions or in their injustice. Neither will it repine aloud in adversity. It will always in adversity remember, that *whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.**

* Hebrews 12

But further and more than all this. To those who under the Gospel diligently seek God, the knowledge and the grace which are given, bring in their train as another reward, the bright and glorious promises of life. It is impossible now, such is the knowledge now, and such the grace now, for the promises of life not to be near at hand. We have a book plainly written for us to read in; we have not now to hear only a prophet slow of speech or dealing in dark notices, but we have it in our power to read the promises in the plainest terms at home in our closets. We have not now a vision, a terrifying vision; we have not now a voice coming only occasionally, and that only to a few, to a single priest, or to a single retired prophet. But we have a company of Apostles, a company of preachers, to tell us often and in every place and aloud of the promises of life, and that too in the clearest words. Wherever we go we can carry the promises with us. The men of old had but a single solitary temple, and that too placed in a nook of the world; but we have our temple in every place; we have the heavens themselves for our temple, the heavens being now the place for every eye in devotion to look to, and for every mouth in prayer to speak to. They are now our holy of holies, where if we believe, and by believing only, we are to enter and to stay for ever.

The reflections which may now press on our bosoms are these; first of all, that we are to take revelation for our guide as to the very existence of God, and if so, then by the plainest consequence, which it would be improper to omit, considering amongst what sort of errors we live, that we are to

take it for our guide, as to his nature or essence, as to what he is in his mode of existence, as to the names by which he is called, and as to his perfections. When we come unto God we are to go by the Bible as to the sentiments we are to have of him. Our faith is to have those sentiments in it, and certainly, as to one sentiment we have so much insisted on, we cannot but be encouraged to come. Let us come then to him; let us seek him diligently. *He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Let us come to him for knowledge, for grace, for the promises of everlasting life. I expressed myself in a hesitating manner as to the reference in the text to the circumstances of the patriarch mentioned just before it. Yet one point is quite clear, that if we do not admit the first part of the text to be a conclusion from his case, that position is at any rate, a general position. *Without faith it is impossible to please God.* We are then to consider whether we have faith; let us search and see whether we have it. The point is quite clear. If we have not faith, we cannot please God. Let us try ourselves, whether we have it. Let us not shrink from this examination of ourselves. There is no very strict scrutiny necessary. It is tolerably easy if we please, to understand our own case, and certainly it is worth our while to understand it. There is an ample recompence; there is light and knowledge for us, there is the grace of the Holy Ghost for us, there is the covenant of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost for us. There is heaven in view, our sure, everlasting inheritance. *Amen.*

VIII.

THE FAITH OF NOAH.

HEBREWS xi. 7.

By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness, which is by faith.

In the account here given of Noah, in the outset of it, there is a manifest reference to what is laid down concerning faith in the beginning of this chapter. In the beginning of it we are taught, that faith gives an evidence or a present reality to things not seen, and in this account of Noah it appears, that his faith gave a present reality to the future intention of God to destroy the world by a deluge. It was specially revealed to him, that the world for its wickedness should be drowned, and acquiescing in the revelation, he gave proof of his obedience; he set to work to prepare the ark, which was to save himself and his family.

The reference has something instructive in it. It was a hard matter to be believed, that Almighty God, of whose goodness there was so much proof,

would give proof of so much wrath, would execute so terrible a judgment. The thought of such an universal destruction was almost too big, too fearful for the mind, to entertain. Even Noah, whilst he believed it would come, was *moved with fear*. And if such a waste, such an agony of all living creatures dying together were almost too much for the thought of the mind, the eye could scarce reckon on being a witness to it. It was, as a thing not to be seen.

How great the faith of Noah was, is evident at once on the very face of the account, on the very first reading of this short verse of the Apostle. But then there is no harm, there may be good in entering into a minute consideration of it. To go into detail is at all times a proper employment for those, who read the Bible, and it is surely proper for a sermon, which is, if it serve its true purpose, for the exposition of the Bible, for the same purpose in public, as meditation is for in private. Do we meditate in private on what the Bible says? Do we ponder its weighty words, and take out for our use the doctrine they contain?

The ark which Noah was to build, must have been agreeably to what we read of its dimensions, of considerable size, and even on this account must have taken up much time in building. Nor could the contrivance of the internal part be other, than a work of time. It was necessary, there should be accommodations for a numerous family, not only for Noah and his seven, the seven of his house, but for the many pairs, the many samples, which were also to be preserved, of a large part of the animal creation. And what during this long preparation and building must have been the feelings of the principal

contriver and workman? As he bent down to his work, how must his soul have been bent down with grief and melancholy. He was building indeed for his own safety, but then if he had that heart, which a believer always has, the heart of love and pity, *for faith worketh by love*, and doubtless he had that heart, he must have given vent to many a sigh, and shed many a tear during his long occupation. He was building that, in the daily progress of which ruin day by day drew nearer; he was building that, on the finishing of which was to begin the outpouring of the wrath of God. How great must his faith have been, who could work this work with such an expectation, with such a prospect before him. This obedience was indeed the obedience of faith.

Neither was this work a silent, secret work. It could not for its very magnitude have been so. As it was a long and mighty undertaking, it must have been a public work, making a noise in the world. It is too, said of Noah, that he was a preacher, and if so, he had much matter for preaching in this work. He had a doctrine in it; he had in it denunciation, admonition, and warning. He could out of this work tell of dreadful woes to come, even of woes just at hand on a guilty unbelieving world. If he could not speak of mercy, he could speak of judgment. And how great must his faith have been, who had judgment only to preach of, who was engaged in a work of judgment only, who if he spake of mercy, foresaw there was no mercy, who if he called men to repentance, foresaw, they would not repent. How must his heart have been *moved with fear*, who for years, we may venture to say, had such an office, such a task, as this! Let no

preacher with such an example, as this, before him, be discouraged. Experience pretty plainly proves, that men, who hear much preaching, do still not profit by it, do still not repent. Have not we heard much preaching? Have not we heard the voice, the call of preachers? And yet many, alas! too many have not repented. We, who now preach, cannot strictly speaking foresee men will not repent. There are no prophets amongst preachers now. But experience has, so to speak, something of the prophet in it. Past experience has proved, that thousands and tens of thousands of men dressed in the garb of Christians have still after many lessons, never become such in heart, and doubtless future experience will be like the past. The past and the future are doubtless so to speak, as like, as brothers, as the younger is like the elder. Some of us alas, what shall we be in the end?

The text tells us, that Noah by his faith condemned the world. Whence it appears, that his faith, whilst it was great, considered as the faith of his own bosom, was also conspicuous. It was conspicuous in its sign, and that sign was the ark. We cannot doubt, but that it was conspicuous, much observed even while it was building. Such a storehouse of such a size, could not, we may be bold to say, be a work unobserved, and particularly as it was the work of a preacher of righteousness. The works of a preacher of righteousness are not, as we well know, unobserved; they are, as we well know, much noticed, much criticized, and especially, if the preacher be faithful, if his works be righteous, if his works be the fruits of faith, which this work of Noah's we are assured, was. How too, could it be

unknown, if he who preached made his work the text, so to speak, which he preached from, if he was used for years to point to it as to the beacon, to awaken and alarm the sleeping guilty.

Supposing however, this to have been possible that the work during its preparation was not greatly observed, we may picture to ourselves that scene, when the animals destined for preservation along with the Patriarch were collected by him for that purpose, when they came, a numerous army, to be shut up in the ark along with him; we may picture to ourselves, what sort of a time that was, when he with his seven, the seven of his house, took their leave of the rest of the world, and entered the ark themselves also to be shut in. If the hand of God which shut the door, was invisible, yet surely this scene was not. Surely here was faith visible; surely here was faith palpable. Surely this scene exhibited faith, and surely faith so exhibited was the condemnation of the world. Surely after this exhibition that voice, which called to the waters to come and drown, was a righteous voice.

Let no believer with this example before him, doubt what will be the end of his faith. His neighbours will certainly do, as was done in the days of Noah. They will certainly go after their business, their sports and their pleasures, as was done then, with the like unconcern. They will eat and drink and marry and be given in marriage. But let the believer doubt not concerning the end of his faith. Let him keep his faith; let him go on in the works of it. Let him be content with his days of weeping; let him acquiesce in his tearful time. The day will at last come, though it may seem to tarry, when the

testimony of his faith shall be heard, though heard not now. When he is placed in person by the side of God and his Son, his faith, which is now on the side of God, on the side of his truth and authority, shall give a warrant to his righteous judgment, to the destruction *by fire* of the impenitent and unbelieving.

The text further tells us, that Noah by his faith became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Noah had built his ark in faith. By his faith he escaped a present destruction; by his faith he gained a temporal salvation. By his faith likewise, the account goes on to say, he gained another and a higher distinction, another and a better blessing, the righteousness, which is the title to heaven, to an eternal salvation. Faith could not well do more for him. Indeed it is worthy of notice, how the description of this last distinction conferred on Noah, of this his last blessing derived from his faith, is in the same terms, which are used by the same writer, St. Paul, when describing the distinction and blessing conferred in Gospel times on those, who believe. We cannot but remember the expressions. They are familiar terms with the writer in his other writings addressed to the churches, he had founded. They are the language, he preached in every where, when calling men every where to repent and believe. Whence we shall do well to reflect, if such phrase suited the case of Noah, how old the Gospel is, how old our Christianity is, how they who believed before the deluge had respect to the future atonement and obedience of Christ, as we who believe now have respect to the same past atonement and past obedience; how having the same faith,

which we now have, they had the same justification. We shall do well to reflect, how from the beginning unto the end of time pardon, acceptance, salvation, are always derived from the same source, and that no man is, or ever was, or ever will be saved by any law, or any opinion, or any way or sect he may follow, unless this his law, opinion, way, or sect, be this our special Christianity.* Let us not deceive ourselves in this matter. Do we sincerely accept the Gospel? To whom shall we go, if not to Jesus Christ?

The expressions in the text describing this last distinction, this last blessing bestowed on Noah are not to be understood, as if Noah now for the first time believed, or became now for the first time heir of the righteousness which is by faith. He had doubtless believed long before, and had become heir long before. He was doubtless at this period a tried believer, fitted by long habit in believing or by a long life of faith, and after many trials of his faith amidst a corrupt world, for this great trial of preparing for the deluge. But the expressions may be understood, as if the occasion, being an extraordinary occasion, called for the particular mention of this distinction and this blessing, as if the distinction and blessing, though substantially enjoyed before, were deserving of being noted down, as his reward for acts of faith bringing such glory to God with such publicity, and under such long labour and long difficulty, and, we may add, under such horrors. Or, what is their more probable meaning, the expressions are to be understood as describing the

assurance of his faith, and the assurance of his sonship, or of his heirship, of his being heir of God, a joint heir with Christ. He had doubtless on this occasion, though he had believed before, and often believed before, put his public seal on his faith; he had doubtless, under the most severe test given proof of unshaken confidence beyond his ordinary confidence; he had shewn the assurance of faith, and he received in return the assurance of being heir.

The subject has instruction in it. It is, or it may be called a history in one example of faith. It is a history of one of the most severe trials of faith, that is almost to be found on record. What courage must the Patriarch have had; what an undaunted heart; what reliance on God for protection, for the security of himself and his family in the midst of such perils, the perils of a wicked world sunk in such corruption, that God repented he had made it, and the perils of the overwhelming deluge. It is not said, that the Patriarch suffered from the persecutions and wrongs of wicked men, but we may be sure, he tasted enough of them. That they despised his admonitions, his warnings, or his preaching, is clear. They perished in their rejection of them, and we may be sure, that, where there are contempt and rejection of reproof, there will not be wanting injury and insult to the reprover.

Let us too, remark the courage of the faith of the Patriarch, the perseverance, the intrepidity of his faith, and hence let no believer turn pale before his enemies, before the enemies of God and his Christ. In his abode, however humble it may be, and how-

ever noiseless his retreat, he will still have something to suffer, something to do for God and in his name. Even his humble, little works of faith, will require courage; his well-doing will call for perseverance. His servants, his neighbours, his children, his partners, will some one or other of them, put him to the test, and perhaps, every day. Is he weak before them? Is he craven-hearted, where he has so little to be afraid of?

Let us consider our recompence. Let us consider how our testimony will one day be called for. We shall one day have to appear before God with the rest of the world, and surely we cannot but wish his triumph over the wicked, we cannot but wish on that day to give sentence with him on the impenitent and unbelieving. At any rate we cannot but wish to be assured, that we are the sons of God, that we are the heirs of the righteousness, which is by faith. But then, if we be faithless and recreant, if we go not forward, if we be unsteady and wavering, if we will not take to the vessel, embarking cheerfully and running all risks, Christ being the pilot of the vessel, how will our case turn out? We shall not be of the family, that is preserved.

IX.

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM.

HEBREWS xi. 8.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

What circumstances Abraham was in, when he was called, as is here represented, it cannot from the brevity of the history but be imperfectly determined. It appears, that he was of the family, which descended from Shem the son of Noah in the line which had from Noah the special blessing. It appears, that he was of the line, in which Japhet another son was to find his own chief blessing, that peculiar blessing, which was one day to come upon all mankind, of whom Japhet more than the other two sons was the Progenitor and Father. It appears, that he was of the holy family, the holy line.

It is thought, and with reason, that the family was, where they were settled, rich and powerful. Unquestionably Abraham when he left home, is spoken of in a way that implies his own wealth, and soon after, when he had arrived in Canaan, as

being very rich in cattle, in silver and gold. Nor is it less certain, that, when Abraham was called away, the holy family had degenerated, that idolatry had crept in amongst them. The family is expressly said in the book of Joshua to have served other Gods at the time of Abraham's call, and in the book of Genesis we hear of idol Gods being in the family; we hear of Jacob's own wife stealing the Gods of her father Laban, and of the real or pretended anger of her father on account of the theft.

Of the design of God in calling Abraham we can form a better judgment than of the circumstances he was in at the time. We can do this, because we have the subsequent history in our hands. We know now that it was the design of God at this period to take out of the holy line a particular branch of it leaving its other branches with the rest of the Gentile world in an apostate Church, and to place this branch in a spot of the earth, where it was to be under his special care, till the Messiah came. We know now that it was the design of God at this period to take to himself the land of Canaan as a kingdom for himself, and to nurse and rear a nation to possess and occupy it, himself being the King of that nation, and to be the King of it either by himself actually directing and governing, or by vicegerents governing till the Messiah was born a child of that nation in that land. We know now that this land so chosen was the native land of our Christ, who was a Jew, a descendant of Abraham.

But then of this, which we know we are to consider how much Abraham on this his call knew in order to determine, what his faith was, or what his faith had respect to. That he had some distinct

religious knowledge, we may be almost sure from his being of the holy family in which the true, the ancient religion was for many generations by the special favour and in the special scheme of God, more safely preserved than in other families. That he was already before this call himself a believer, is also a matter, on which we cannot doubt from the interpretation, which he put upon this call, and which though in part erroneous, was still as an article of religion, not faulty. He took the land he was to go to from home and which he was to be shewn, to be as the Apostle expresses it, a heavenly country, to be a city, a permanent abode, whose builder was God, to be heaven itself. He had plainly before this call his hopes in heaven.

The call put his faith to the test. The faith which he had at home within the circle of his family, the faith, in whlch he lived in the quiet of his native land with those, whose religious profession was, as his own, of the same pure origin, this call brought into trial. He was to quit his native land, his father's house, his kindred and friends. He was to quit them all for ever, as appears from the construction he put upon the call. He was never to return to them. They might come to him, but he was not to return to them. He was not to return to them, though, as it turned out afterwards, the distance he went to was not extremely great, nor was the return difficult or hazardous.

Abraham had it is true, with this trial something in the call itself to comfort him. It was promised him, that he should be the father of a great nation, that his name should be great; that he should prosper and be protected from wrongs, and further, that

an extraordinary blessing should be derived from him to all other nations. The promise was large and ample. But then it is to be considered, that it was prefaced with a great trial and difficulty first of all to be surmounted. He was to quit home for ever. It is also to be considered, that he was to go he knew not whither, and though the land he was to go to would certainly be shewn him, still the obscurity was discouraging. He was to become a wanderer first; he was as a pilgrim travelling to no bourn first to cast himself on the wide world, apparently a matter contrary to all reason and prudence and all practice, before he should know his new home and resting-place. It is also to be considered, that the promise, though large and ample, was of things future, of things, it could not be said, how far future, and we all know, how such a futurity, however big with promised advantages, operates on the feeble hesitating mind of man, and particularly, where there are present comforts, present riches and power, as in this case there probably were. It is also to be considered, that the very foundation of these great things so promised seemed to be wanting. He not only knew not the land, on which his foot was to cease from wandering, but, strange matter for further reflection, he was to become the father of a great nation, who was himself at this time seventy-five years of age, and who had a barren wife. Indeed it appears afterwards in the subsequent history, after he had surmounted this trial of quitting his home for ever, that on this part of the promise he had much distrust, and therefore that the country promised him, the land he was to have, was as we may understand also from the text, the

principal thing in the promise, on which he relied. He knew, as appears from this chapter, that if he failed of a present country, he should still have one hereafter, a heavenly country, and he became a wanderer never to return in the faith of this inheritance.

It is hardly necessary to remark, though it is proper enough to do so by way of lesson from this example, how little of a disposition there is in us all to hazard our present ease or to give it up in exchange for future difficulty, though the exchange, that difficulty past, be greatly in our favour, though a happiness much more intense, much more satisfactory and durable, follow from the sacrifice. It is perhaps, a part of our infirmity, as having a fleshly nature very susceptible of pain, and very pliant and yielding to the touch of pleasure, it is a part perhaps, of our self-love to be thus affected. We are very selfish and short-sighted, and our selfishness seems to dim our sight the more; we grasp at the present opportunity; we seize it and hug it. Is not this a true account of our nature, of our way of acting in life, and in business?

It is likewise hardly necessary to remark, though it is proper enough to do so for the reason just given, how much this way of acting so apparent in the common matters of life appears also in our religious profession. A religious profession is not of itself so much objected to. The name of the thing has in it no disgust. This were too frightful a sentiment to be current amongst those, who are baptized, who come to Church, who think the title of Christian to be something for them to wear on their front. This were a sentiment endangering the very peace of so-

ciety, the giving a warrant to wickedness, to the outrages of wickedness, riot and blood. But to enter on a religious profession, which is to trench on the selfishness of our nature, which is to pinch and mortify self-love, that is it, which opens fully both to ourselves and others that very selfishness, that very self-love, that indisposition to hazard present ease and comfort for future and greater happiness. If we enter on a religious profession with sincerity, and do but look at the Bible, which doubtless we shall then do, we see at once, what the profession must be, what the call of God to us is. If we turn to the Gospel pages, and do but remark what we certainly cannot then help doing, the lot and portion of saints, we see at once that we are to obey God and not man. And perhaps, as is very natural, we shall pause and hesitate. Our thoughts will be: we are to quit dear connections, probably not their presence or their society and home, but we are to quit their love and tenderness; we are to brave the frowns of a father and the remonstrances of a mother, if they will frown and be uneasy, because we are good; we are to bear the torturing taunts of brothers and sisters, if they will taunt us, because we pray; we are to disregard the revilings and slanders of neighbours.

It is no wonder, if we pause and hesitate at hearing such a call, as this. It is a call, it must not be dissembled, requiring the young to take up in exchange weeping for merriment, sighing for laughter. It is a call bidding the aged, whom the world has itself often made sufficiently sad, and whose laughing it has already taken away, and who are still apt to be rooted in their affections to the

spot of earth they dwell on, to set out in their latter days on a journey having toil in it to a distant land.

Doubtless, to continue the lesson, which is to be drawn from this example, the call has encouragement mixed up in it. It pleased God when he called the Patriarch, whose attachment to his home cannot be questioned, to encourage him to leave it for ever. If he would but go at the bidding great things would be done for him.

It would be improper to say, that Almighty God tempted Abraham on this occasion, to go; that he addressed him with other motives, than the highest and best; that he offered inducements to his ambition, his avarice or vanity. But then it would be only improper to say this with reference to our times. Our times are very different from those of Abraham. On our times, which are the latter days of the world denoting the æra of Christianity and specially so called in a way of distinction from the Jewish and Patriarchal, on these our times the full light of the Gospel has shined and will to the end shine; in these our times heavenly things have themselves come down to us, to handle, to enjoy and understand; the full cup of grace is offered to each to drink, pure, and unmixed, and with a draught sufficient to animate, console and support, at home and abroad, in every change and every chance, in prosperity and affliction, in life and in death. But this was not the case in the age of Abraham. In those days men had to learn heavenly things by a tedious and circuitous lesson; heavenly things were then afar off; they were not, as now, nigh at hand; they were behind a veil, which could not be looked

through. Men were then to be awed into subjection to God by temporal curses and to be soothed into it by temporal blessings. Even Abraham was to be told, that if he would but go from his home to a land that would be shewn him, he should lose nothing by the venture. If he were powerful at home, he should be as a Prince abroad. If he were rich at home, he should be rich abroad. If he were blessed at home, he should be blessed abroad, and no curse of any enemy should hurt him. He should also be what he was not at home, a father, from whom should spring a child of promise, in whom all families, as well as his own, should be blessed.

We are also to bear in mind, that in these inducements of a temporal nature, which were proposed to Abraham, and which touched on his meanest and grossest appetites, his ambition, his vanity, or avarice, though not altogether so, considering, that in the heir promised him was shadowed out that other child of promise, who has been born unto us, our Jesus born in Bethlehem, there was comprized one of the divine purposes. In these inducements there was the intention on the part of God to use this his servant, as the beginner, as the first founder of a nation and kingdom, of which he was himself to be the King, and this intention could not be accomplished but by the means, which made up these very inducements themselves. If Abraham were to be the founder of a nation and kingdom, he must have the means, which are riches and power, they being the ordinary means of accomplishing such a scheme. If this people were all to be from his loins, he must have posterity.

We have intimated, that Abraham, when he set

out from his home, chiefly had respect in his faith to his heavenly inheritance, to the heavenly land, notwithstanding the temporal rewards, which were promised. And such was doubtless the case, though the temporal rewards could not be even then entirely left out of consideration and certainly could not be so, as these rewards came to him in the subsequent years of his life or in the course of his pilgrimage. This however was doubtless at the time the main encouragement contained in the call. And if this were so, what shall we say for ourselves, when we hear now the call of God requiring us to quit in our affections the things on earth, and to set them on things above? What shall we say, who have not to travel abroad for a blessing, who have not to go in search of it in mistrust and anxiety? What shall we say, who have so to speak, heaven brought down to us, for us to almost look within, before whom the veil is rent to give us, so again to speak, a sight of the Holy of Holies itself, who know of a certainty, that Jesus is exalted to the right hand of God, that the sacrifice has been offerred, the atonement made, and that the mediation is sure, and prevailing? What shall we say, if we disobey the call, who in our chambers at home have only to believe and be saved?

It is impossible to hide from ourselves the reluctance we feel to take our affections off from the world and to set them on things above. It cannot be dissembled to ourselves, how we love the world, how we fear men, how we wish to have their smiles, and shrink before their frowns.

But then it is also not to be hidden from us, though it is more easy here to dissemble than in the other

case, that if we will pay more regard to the will of men, than the will of God, if we will shut our eyes to the prospect of heaven so full in our view and so bright, we must abide the event of our condemnation, which is quite as sure to the unbeliever, as heaven is to him, that believes; we must be content at the last for ever to leave the presence then to be entirely withdrawn of God the Judge taking cognizance of our obedience and disobedience, of our self-denial for his sake, and of our self-love in preference to the love of him and his Son.

X.

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM.

HEBREWS xi. 17.

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten Son.

WHAT gave occasion to this trial of Abraham, does not appear either in this chapter or in Genesis, whence the account is taken, or any where else in the Scripture. It has been supposed indeed, that Abraham had a very ardent desire to have fuller information on the promises he had received, and particularly on the promise concerning his seed, in whom all nations were to be blessed. And this notion of his having this strong desire and even, of his expressing it, is founded on a passage in St. John's Gospel, where Christ says of Abraham, that *Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.** It is supposed, that this passage points to the account in Genesis of this trial of Abraham, and that this account is the fuller information, he was desirous of having, and is the information in answer to this desire.

It was doubtless quite natural for Abraham to have this desire, and particularly, if no other terms

* St. John viii. 56.

were used in the promises, than those which appear in the Bible, if at the time of making the promises nothing more was said than what is there written, which however, it is not necessary for us to think, it being manifest in many places of the Scripture that the substance is given, not the whole of what was revealed, that so to speak, the text of the teacher is given not all the doctrine actually taught. But then it is to be considered, that in the account in Genesis, and in that by St. Paul in the text taken itself from Genesis, not a word is said of this desire of the Patriarch. The matter is there entirely referred to God, as his act, as his trial of Abraham.

It is supposed indeed, further, in order to bring this passage in St. John more fully to bear on this point, that the day of Christ there mentioned which Abraham rejoiced to see, was the day of Christ's death or of his sacrifice of atonement, the day of that precious burnt offering, not merely the day considered, as a point of time, but the characteristic fact and circumstance of it, to do which was the chief end of the office of Christ or of his coming into the world. The day of judgment, it is said, is called the day, a day, as it must be allowed it is, of Christ, and this instance is thought to warrant the notion of this other day. But then it is to be considered, that, though the day of Christ's death or of his sacrifice of atonement may be fairly taken out of all the other days of his life, and may be placed by itself as a principal point of time, as a date for the benefits and blessings to come on all nations, and though the day of judgment may be so taken out of all the days of the world as a great day, a day for an extraordinary transaction, yet the custom of

calling the day of judgment the day, by way of distinction, does not arise from a reference to its being so extraordinary a day. It arises only from a very familiar and short way of speaking in use amongst men, who are so frequently in litigation in courts with each other, and for whom it is so frequently necessary to appoint the day for each party to appear and be heard. The matter in litigation is not always understood, and if understood, cannot be told. Each party is summoned to the day.

Wherefore this instance of the day of judgment being called the day is nothing to the purpose as to this passage in St. John, and if so, and if there be no other instance, which there certainly is not, we must be content with a meaning of that passage, much more plain and much nearer at hand, than the other. We must be content to read, that Abraham had an ardent desire to see the days, in which Christ should live on earth, and that he had obtained by his faith a lively gladsome assurance, they would certainly come. We must let drop an interpretation agreeable enough to a pious fancy, but not quite so agreeable to reason and truth. We must take the account as we find it, that this trial of Abraham was the act of God proving his servant.

We might say, that all the faithful, how faithful soever they be, stand in need of trial. There is in all of us dross enough requiring to be done away. There is in the best of us very little of what is pure. It is well for us, that our salvation is by faith, by faith only, and it is still better for us, if a comparative way of speaking be here allowable, that a little faith will serve our turn, that a little faith, as little

as a grain of mustard seed, the least of all seeds will save a man from Hell, a guilty man, and will bear a man away to Heaven, an impure, filthy man, to a pure place of happiness.

Doubtless Abraham had need of this his trial. After all the specimens of faith he had given, he had still need of the trial of the furnace to purify and brighten his character. Yet perhaps, setting aside this consideration, the sentiment may be hazarded that it was in the counsels of God to make him by this trial, so great, as we are sure, it must be, the pattern for all, who should afterwards believe. He was to be, as we know from his own history and from the testimonies of Prophets and Apostles afterwards given of him, and even from the testimony of Christ himself, the father in some sort of all the faithful. He was to be, as we know, the founder of one nation, in particular; he was to be the father of all Israel, and in a peculiar sense, the father of the true Israel which believed after his example. Nor were the true Israel only the children of Abraham; there were other children besides them. As he believed before he was circumcised, he was to be the father not only of the circumcision, but of the uncircumcision also. He was to be the father as St. Paul speaks, of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; he was to be the father of the Gentile believer, as well as of the Jewish. Nay more than this. We may remember our Lord saying in the Gospel, that men were to come from all quarters of the world, the Jews the special children of the kingdom being cast out, and to sit down in that kingdom, men from the north and the south the east and the west, along with Abraham. We may

remember too, that the bosom of Abraham is but another name for Paradise, whither the faithful go. And if it be so, if these distinctions and honours were intended to accompany the name and character of Abraham, we may perhaps be borne out in saying, that, setting aside the consideration of the furnace so necessary for the purification of all, it was in the counsels of God to make him by this great trial a pattern for all, who should afterwards believe. If through all generations to the end of time he was to be the father of the faithful, it may be allowable to think, it was the intention of God to make him in this great trial fit to wear that name: it may even be allowable to think there was this fitness in the trial itself, that no true believer who is, as such, a true child of Abraham, should ever hereafter shrink from any trial, when he considered, how he, who was the father of the child of promise born to him in extreme old age, laid that child on the altar; how he who had received the promises offered up in obedience to God who had given them, the only heir of the promises, *his only begotten Son.*

It has been thought a difficulty in this account of Abraham's trial, that he was required to do an act seemingly immoral and wicked, giving a sanction to human sacrifices. In order to remove this difficulty, that passage in St. John, we before noticed, has been produced and has been understood, as was also before hinted, to warrant the notion, that it was not with the eye of the mind, with the prophetic eye of faith, Abraham saw the day of Christ, but that with his bodily eye he saw the future sacrifice of Christ in a scenic representation, that the process of the offering of Isaac was

dramatic, Abraham being an actor in that scenery, and having through it the future fact and circumstance of Christ's death exhibited before him. But then we have also above given an answer to this notion: we have shewn the interpretation to be false, and if that be false, the notion built upon it, comes to nothing. We have only in this matter, as to the morality or immorality of this action of Abraham, to consider that no action, which God commands to be done, is immoral, nay we go further than this and say, that as the power of God is the sole foundation of all law, which is to direct another's power, so his pleasure is the sole foundation of the exercise of his power, when he either gives or revokes commands or afterwards gives such as are contrary to his first; nay, we say, that nothing is moral, but what is a divine command, either expressed in God's words, or by deduction from them, which deduction, if it be just, becomes of course as much a divine command as the other, which is expressed in words.

If we obey God we need fear no accuser, let him be who he may, and let him talk what he may of such things as expedience, as law engraven on the heart, as immutable law, the fixed law of nature, an eternal fitness of things, or eternal law. This language may be imposing, but then what is it but glozing speech?

Whence human sacrifices, which we know to have extensively prevailed, had their origin, it is impossible to say, for who will believe, as some have done, they had their origin in Abraham's sacrifice, or who will think Abraham's sacrifice to be the only one, the age he lived in, knew? They might originate

in the revelations given from heaven concerning the future sacrifice of Christ, which we know to be a human sacrifice. They might originate in the wish to conform to that sacrifice, or to offer up one like it, or one approaching in value to it, which in strictness, was the only sacrifice, that God was to be appeased by. It appears indeed from the Bible, that the brute creation was to supply sacrifices for the altars of mankind, or that their blood was the blood appointed to be the type of the blood of the man hereafter to be offered up for all. The Bible however, though enjoining that blood, does not say anything condemning the other practice. Nor, as far as we can judge in such a dark history, as the history of the heathen world is, does it appear, that such of their sacrifices, as were of the blood of men, were unacceptable to God, particularly in those cases, where the offering of the victim was voluntary and deliberate on the part of the victim, and where it was at the same time lawful for the victim to make choice of that death, to which cases we might venture to add the case of the captive taken in war, whose cross was, what it was in the case of Christ, the altar he died upon.

It has been thought in the case of Isaac, that he was willing on this occasion to die, that he acquiesced in the commands of his father and of God. And it is likely, though it is not so said in the account, that he was willing. That it is likely he was willing, may be collected in this way, inasmuch as he was on this occasion, a special type of Christ going beyond in resemblance all other types, all other victims, that were to be offered before the last, which is Christ. He was a human victim, as

well as Christ, and had he not been willing, he had been deficient in a point which is the peculiar glory of Christ; he had not been like in that point to him, *who gave himself for us*, who of his own accord laid down his life. Had he not been willing, he had not been, as the victim was always expected to be even amongst the heathens, who regarded much the inclination of the animal that was to be offered, and who entertained less hopes of acceptance, where the animal shewed reluctance.

However, it is not material for us to consider, whether Isaac were willing or not, to die this death. It is not necessary the type should be in any but leading points like the antitype.

It is sufficient, that the father was willing, as in all other cases, it was sufficient, if the offerer were willing, whether the animal he offered were willing or not, though it was more agreeable to his feelings, that a willingness appeared there, also. In all other cases the willingness of the offerer was taken for the willingness of the thing offered, the thing offered being the property of the offerer, being from his flock or herd. And so it was in this case; the willingness of the father was taken for the willingness of the son, excepting that in this case, the son, though of the house of his father, and in some sense, of the property of his father, was much more the property of God, than he was of his father: he was the peculiar property of God. He was the peculiar son of the house of his father; he was different from the other sons of Abraham. The other sons of Abraham were the property of God, as God is the Lord and owner of all things and of all men, but this son was in a higher sense than this, the property of

God. He was selected for a special purpose; he was born for a special purpose; he was as much in covenant with God as the father was; he was born, as the other was called, for a purpose of the most extensive spiritual blessing, and the most universal spiritual mercy. Wherefore the giving him up to die, the leading him away to the mountain to die, the binding him on the altar, though acts done by the father, were acts done by him as God's agent, rather than his own acts, though he knew it not. These were much more the acts of God, than the acts of the father. And, if this be so, it was lawful for the son to die; he had the approbation and consent of God to be this victim. And, if he were thus a lawful victim, his case comes under the case of those sacrifices, which God of old ever accepted, whether human or not. It comes under the very case of the sacrifice of Christ itself, and is no more liable to the charge of barbarity and cruelty than that sacrifice was. It subjects God, and his servant, who offered the son, to that accusation, no more than the sacrifice of Christ impeaches the mercy of the Father of Christ.

That Abraham had faith, while he was performing this tremendous duty; that he kept his hope in the mercy and power of God, while he was binding his son on the altar and lifting up the knife to kill, we are sure from what the Apostle says. He trusted in a power, the Apostle tells us, sufficient to bring his child of promise back again to him after death; he trusted in the power able to raise him, even from the dead.

Yet when we consider, how nigh to the very last consolation, this consolation is, which looks to the

return of a child after dying, how nigh to the very last act of faith, which a believer can exercise, this act is, which believes in a resurrection of a son slaughtered in sacrifice, we cannot but admire the extraordinary faith of the father. Nor can we wonder, if an Apostle much impressed with this extraordinary transaction should say, *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered his Son Isaac on the altar?* Nor if he say, *Thou seest how faith wrought with his works,* nor if he further say, how his *faith by works was made perfect.* Nor can we wonder, if at this point of the Patriarch's life, though in the latter days of it, and long after he had believed, and had been justified, long after he had obtained the righteousness of faith and had been called *the friend of God,* the Apostle purposely bring in here and distinctly mention his faith, and the righteousness of his faith, and his friendship with God, as if on such a transaction, as this, the Scripture telling of such things, of such noble things, of such distinctions and honours, was specially fulfilled, as if Abraham, though he had been so before, was now indeed a believer, was, though he had been so before, now indeed justified, was now, though he had been long so before, indeed the friend of God.

If we have faith shall I not now say? we see, what it can do for us in our extremity, in the very crisis of our affairs. We see what it can do for us, when we come to our last hopes and expectations. Though we have believed already, though we are already justified, yet trials of faith will come, and they may be such, as shall bring us to our wits' end. They may be such, as, we shall be prone to think, could not have happened to one favoured already

with the smiles of heaven. We may be brought to our last consolation, to seemingly the last act of faith, that a man can exercise.

Such, indeed, has been the lot of many. When the hopes of life go away, when the frame of the body has lost its supports, or has lost, to use a familiar phrase, the strength of its timbers, it has been the lot of many, to have a cloud come on their future prospects.

Sickness has oft this cloud upon it. Death comes frequently wrapped in this cloud. If we have faith, we may have relief; we shall not be quite bereft. There shall be from the midst of the cloud a ray of light partaking of the nature of that light, which is, where no clouds are, which is the same as the light of heaven.

Let us believe in Jesus, who died in sacrifice and seemed to die, bereaved himself, and bereaving all of hope, that knew him, yet who surely came again according to his promise, who returned from the grave, and having risen ascended, where by faith his chosen are to follow him.

Let us believe in our Christ, not expected to come, but who has come. Let us believe in our Christ, whom we have not to desire to see, but whom we know, has been seen, and who, we know, will also come once more to make us the complete heirs of his Father's kingdom of glory.

XI.

THE FAITH OF ISAAC.

HEBREWS xi. 20.

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

WHAT were the reasons which induced Almighty God to prefer Jacob to Esau, the younger brother to the elder, as we find in the story concerning them he did, it is impossible with certainty to say. It is clear from the account given by St. Paul in the epistle to the Romans, that the preference had nothing to do with the will of either party. The choice which God made, was disclosed, though to be sure, it had been long before made, when the children, who were twins, were in the womb of their mother, and certainly we can say nothing about the will of those, who are in such circumstances, who have done neither good nor evil. Indeed it is manifest St. Paul considers the election, as having nothing to do with the will of either. He concludes, *it is not of him that willeth.*

Some think that the election had respect to the difference which afterwards appeared in the character of the children, when they grew up, that the

preference of Jacob had respect to his after faith, the other not having the like. But then the faith of Jacob must in some way be connected with his will. The Holy Spirit, who worketh in us faith, *worketh in us to will;* he worketh in us the choice, we make of the Saviour. And certainly to suppose any reference, though indirectly, to the will of Jacob, contradicts in terms the Apostle, who tells us, that when the preference was disclosed to the mother, the children had done neither good nor evil, and who concludes out of this very circumstance, that it is not of him, that willeth. *So then it is not of him, that willeth.*

Some think, that Jacob and Esau were considered as public persons, as representatives each, of the nations, which sprang from them, and that the preference had respect to the Israelites above the Edomites. But then, allowing Jacob and Esau to be such public persons, this will not at all help the matter, as to the will of the parties. A nation has no will considered as a nation; it has as such, no will, as to duty or moral obligation, as to the doing of good or evil. Neither will this consideration of their being public persons representing each his nation, help the matter as to the dispensation or distribution of grace. In the approved, in the elected nation, there will certainly be more religious advantages, than in the rejected. This election being confessedly the election of grace, there will certainly in the first case be more righteous persons than in the other, there will certainly in the first case be more individuals saved and fewer lost than in the other. The individuals of

each nation must unavoidably have respectively, the benefit or disadvantage of the national preference, and also unavoidably without respect either to the after will or to the after faith of the individuals in this way preferred to the others.

Whether Jacob and Esau may be considered as public persons of the sort, we have mentioned, it is not necessary for us to ascertain. Whether they be such or not, does not seem to alter the question, we have touched on, at all. It is however very true, that Jacob was a public person in a sense that Esau was not. He became under the preference, that was shewn him above Esau, a public person, the representative of the Messiah. Under this preference he became heir to the promise made to Abraham; he became heir to every thing contained in the covenant made with Abraham. The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, who was the Messiah, became by this election the God also of Jacob, and Jacob became the covenanted father of the nation that was to spring from him, as well as Abraham, or Isaac. He became a father in the line, from which the seed was to come to which the promises were made; he became the seed representing the future promised seed, which was Christ.

It may be considered as certain, that the Messiah the Mediator appeared from the first beginning of time in the form of man. Whether he had that form from all eternity, need not perhaps be thought, but that he wore it at creating the world may be considered as certain. He wore it with reference to his future incarnation, and his wearing it gives a propriety to his manner of creating. It lessens

also, not indeed the wonder of the work but the majesty of him, who did it. It diminishes the distance between the creature and the Creator.

That this was the form of the Messiah may be learned from the evidences, not a few, of his appearing to his servants under the whole of the old Testament. When therefore we consider the Messiah thus appearing in a form so familiar to ourselves, thus existing, we will venture to say, after the fashion of a man, we need not be so much surprised, as we are apt to be, that he should act, as if he had the feelings of a man, that his actions should be such, as ours, that he should make an election amongst men, and give a preference to, or love this man above that. We know, that the Messiah, when he came into the world amongst us manifesting himself distinctly to us to be touched and handled, shewed he had our feelings. We know, that he did make an election amongst men, and even amongst his favoured disciples had a preference. It ought then to be no great matter of wonder, if before his coming he shewed such preferences. If his plans or his government required a servant for a peculiar service, why should he not do, as we do, chuse whom he pleases, for his service? If he wanted a representative of himself, an office certainly, even ourselves being judges, of dignity and trust, why should he not do, as we do, chuse whom he pleases, why should he not prefer Jacob to Esau? We indeed in our choice commonly have respect to previous qualifications, we being responsible for the management of our affairs even by our servants, to God, and even to man. But then in the election made by God of his ser-

vants there is no such responsibility, and there being no responsibility, the whole of the election must be a matter of compleat favour only, a matter entirely of grace. The only rule of choice that is or can be in this case, is the pleasure of God.

Upon these considerations, it becomes perhaps more easy to understand, than perhaps it would without them have been, what was the faith of Isaac, when he blessed his two sons. These considerations are perhaps, no unsuitable preface to an account of his faith, who, after he became acquainted with the falsehood and treachery of his younger son, still confirmed the blessing, which falsehood and treachery had gained, and gave to the elder, though so injured, only an inferior blessing. It was impossible for the mind of Isaac not to be greatly affected on the discovery of the mistake, he had apparently made, and of the misconduct of Jacob. Indeed, in the history, it is said that he was greatly affected. When the true Esau came for the blessing, it is said, *he trembled very exceedingly.*

What consolation Isaac took under such an event happening in his family, we are not distinctly told. Yet it is plainly to be collected from the history, that he very soon acquiesced in it. It is plain, that he was not very forward even to give a second and lesser blessing to his injured elder son. Nor are we told, that he even chid the offending son, though he had done a deed in destroying the hopes of his brother next after the murder of a brother. How great must the faith of Isaac have been, that he should so soon acquiesce, that having let his blessing go to so treacherous, to so guilty a son, he

should not think of recalling it. That son had, when his mother prompted him to the treachery, expressed his fears, lest the discovery should draw down a curse, instead of a blessing. The father, however, uttered no curse. He saw in silence the hand and purpose of God. He saw the purpose, even through the sins of the son, accomplished for that son, and he laid his hand on his mouth. He saw the son whom he had himself preferred, set aside for the other, and he bowed to the preference God had. He saw the son whom he had himself appointed for the blessing, whom he had told to prepare himself for it, and to come to him at a set time for it; he saw his favourite son all on a sudden, in an unexpected way, disappointed and rejected, and though there was grief in his patience, he still took it in patience. Nay, he went further even than this: he not only allowed the blessing to remain, where it had been given, but he confirmed it on the head of his treacherous and guilty son; he said of this son, even in the teeth of Esau, who wept to move his father to bless him also; he said; *yea, he shall be blessed.*

It was a precious blessing. It was the blessing Isaac himself had derived from Abraham, which he had derived from God speaking to him as well as to Abraham. It was that special blessing, by which himself and Abraham were in special covenant with God, by which the God of heaven and earth became the special God, so to speak, of Abraham, and the special God of Isaac, by which they each, became the head, the covenanted head of a new people, of a new Church, by which they each, became the representative of the Messiah, who was to come.

Contemplating the nature and extent of this blessing Isaac had little to say to Esau. He gave him it is true, a blessing, but it was a little blessing compared with the other's. It was a blessing also at a very great distance, if there were anything spiritual in it, whilst the other's was a blessing near at hand, and of large extent as a temporal, and also, as a spiritual blessing. Contemplating this blesssing Isaac was no longer for Esau, he was now all Jacob's; he saw in Jacob his better heir; he saw in him the heir of Abraham, and the heir of heaven. He gave protection to Jacob against the machinations of Esau, and when he could no longer keep him in safety at home, the other threatening his life, he sent him to a place of safety, and sent him thither with the same blessing confirmed upon his head. It was indeed a time for heart-aches to the father and the mother, and doubtless it was proper there should be heart-aches, for, where there is sin, shall there not be heart-aches? When the righteous sin, shall there not be heart-aches? In this case the mother had been a sharer in the wickedness of her son, and she was to lose him for his wickedness and her own. The father, however, was still unmoved: though he distinctly knew the cause of his son's going into banishment, that it was owing to the sin of the son, he still in faith blessed him before he went; he still blessed the lad whom he was to see no more; he blessed the lad, whom he was obliged to send away on account of his wife's sin and the lad's own sin.

Out of this domestic story we may learn something, which may have an use. We may learn this, that in a holy family strange events may fall out,

that even in a family, on which the blessing of God rests, there may be specimens of strange wickedness. We may also learn this, especially those of us, who are parents, that the partialities of parents may lead to very severe trials, that the favourite of a parent may be no favourite of heaven. We may also learn another thing, especially those of us, who are parents, that the distribution of the gift of grace is under no one's controul, but God's, that the first may be last, and the last first, that the prodigal wanderer may be recalled, and he who always abides at home, become a castaway.

We may also, all of us learn this, namely, what sort of a thing true faith is, how it is a grace with nearly every other grace hanging about it, how it has humility in it, how it bows the heart to the pleasure of God, how it bends the neck before his sovereign will; how too, it has patience in it, how patiently it takes the thwarting cross, how in disappointment it has hope, how it can even hope against hope; how too, we may also learn, it has wisdom and foresight on it, how it can look abroad on the storms of life, nor yet despair of a fair day to come; how it can see even in mischief and mishap, the hand not visible to all men, the leading guiding hand of God; how too, even in sin it can discern an appointment of Providence, how in deeds, that are truly hateful for their disobedience sake, it can expect an event of mercy and blessing, and can wait for that time, when all irregularities, all calamity, all sin, shall appear to be parts of a scheme, in which the mercy and glory of God shall be exalted.

Let us, who believe, weigh these lessons.

XII.

THE FAITH OF JACOB ON HIS DEATH BED.

HEBREWS xi. 21.

By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped leaning upon the top of his staff.

WHEN Isaac the father of Esau and Jacob proposed to bless Esau, he does not appear to have known, that a distinction had been already made between his two sons, that the younger had been predestined by Almighty God for the blessing, he himself proposed to give to the elder. In this respect there is a difference between the intention of Isaac and the intention of Jacob, who, as is said in the Text, *when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph,* for, when Jacob proposed to bless these two, he manifestly knew beforehand, that a distinction between them had been already made in the counsels of God, that, though he was to give a blessing to both, he was to give to the younger the larger blessing.

How or by what sort of revelation Jacob was informed of this distinction, we are not told. We are only told, that what he did at the time of blessing,

he did *wittingly*, that he guided his hands *wittingly* putting his right hand on the head of the younger who stood towards his left side, and his left on the head of the elder, who was placed on his right.

That he was in some way told of the distinction, we cannot doubt, as also we cannot doubt, by whom he was told. It is plain from the history in Genesis, who it was, that had told him. It was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it was the God, who had fed him himself all his life long, it was his own redeeming Angel, who had told him. In the blessing, as is plain from the history, he calls down grace and favour on the lads from that his God. From him, who had given the preference to the younger, he calls down the blessing.

What the blessing in all its meaning was, we cannot with exactness say. It was manifestly such, that Jacob had no scruples in what he did, that, when Joseph the father of the lads was displeased, he disregarded the dissatisfaction of the father, that he at once obeyed the dictate of God directing him to give, though a blessing to both, yet to the youngest, who was Ephraim, the largest. Jacob certainly believed the blessing to be great.

If we had the local history of the Jewish nation in a more minute form than is recorded in the Bible we could perhaps with exactness tell of the distinction between Manasseh and Ephraim, and of the distinction between their two tribes and the other ten. We know indeed so much at least of Ephraim, that he was certainly the father of a numerous and powerful tribe, of a tribe so numerous and powerful, as that after the separation of the ten from Judah and Benjamin his name was sometimes

put for Israel itself, for the whole of the ten. *O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee?**

It is however, probable, that in the blessing something more than this was intended. There were in it power and distinction arising from population and territory, but then it had also a spiritual meaning. Would Jacob, we might ask, have been so resolute, as he was, as to the way of giving the blessing, had there not been comprized in it something more than such power and distinction? The language of it is; *God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God, which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel, which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.* And certainly in this language there is something more included, than the grace of temporal things; certainly, though that be insisted on, there is another grace, besides that. There is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, there is the blessing of that God; there is the blessing of the Mediator and of the Messiah; there is too the redeeming Angel, the Angel of the covenant, the deliverer, the instructor, the saviour Angel. The lads and the people springing from them were also to have the name of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob upon them; they were to be the children of Abraham in a perpetual succession and family, nor children in the ordinary sense, such, as nature suggests, but in the truest and best, such, as is from the Spirit. They were to be the tribes for the conservation of the Church of Christ,

* Hos. vi. 4. Ezekiel, xxxvii. 16., &c.

for the augmentation and increase, for the support and honour of it.

We before said, that the local history of the Jewish nation is not so given in the Bible, as to shew with much distinctness, how this prediction of Jacob, or how the blessing on Manasseh and Ephraim was brought to pass. Yet perhaps, when we consider the first settlement under Joshua of the twelve tribes in Canaan, we may be inclined to think, that the number and power, the fidelity and allegiance of the tribe of Manasseh gave occasion to that tribe's being placed on the eastern frontier of the land, that it was on these accounts there placed, as a guardian of that frontier, whose valour and fidelity could be relied on against the encroachments or invasion of the hostile nations in that quarter. And when we look into the prophecy of Hosea, which was delivered, when the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were separated from each other, and were each, in their most flourishing state, we plainly find, that Ephraim taken for Israel is matched with Judah both as to its power and as to its spiritual state. We there find, that the blemishes of Ephraim were the blemishes of Judah, and the graces of Ephraim the graces of Judah. Nor from the account does it appear, that the Church of the Mediator or the Church of Christ was less cared for and less honoured by God in Ephraim, that it was in Judah. We there read, that this prophecy of Jacob was fulfilled in its best, in its spiritual sense, as to Ephraim, and that Ephraim was then a true child of Abraham having upon him the name of the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, having on his side and worship-

ping the redeeming Angel of Jacob. Neither ought we to omit to mention, as being a fulfillment of his prophecy concerning Ephraim, still more remarkable than when the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah were each, in their most flourishing state, how even in the captivity in Babylon this tribe was exalted and favoured above the rest, and was the compeer of Judah itself. It was, Ezekiel tells us,* to be restored at the head of Israel with Judah itself. It was, he tells us, to be blended with Judah and mixed up with it in one nation, in one Church, in one body, in the very one body of Christ at the final establishment of his kingdom.

Upon these considerations it becomes plain, what was the nature of the faith of Jacob, when he blessed these two lads. He saw in them the props of the kingdom and people, that were in them to spring from his loins. He saw in Ephraim especially, the establishment and prosperity of the Church of the Mediator his God ; he saw in him a spiritual seed afar off even in the remotest generations of his posterity, and he took it as for ages a proof, that God would keep his covenant made with Abraham, with Isaac, and with himself, the covenant, in which his God engaged never to leave or forsake the family. Nor are these the only reflections which the text directs us to with reference to the faith which Jacob had, when he was a dying. We may remark in it an allusion to an event, in which the father of the two lads was concerned, in which Joseph was required to promise on oath, that he would not suffer his father when dead, to be buried in Egypt, but would carry him to the burying place

* Ezekiel xxxvii. 16, &c.

of Abraham and Isaac. On which promise given by the son, it is said in the text, *Jacob worshipped leaning upon the top of his staff.*

It sometimes happens, that men, when they are a dying, will express a wish concerning their burying place. They will have concerning it some superstitious sentiment or some sickly caprice. Such however, was not the motive of the Patriarch's wish. His wish was founded on that remarkable promise made by God to his fathers Abraham and Isaac and to himself, that the land of Canaan should be their's and their seed's after them. And in faith he expressed this wish, and learning, that it would be attended to, he bowed his head in acquiescence and complacency.

Whether in this wish Jacob had respect to the hidden meaning of that promise, to its being the promise of a land typifying another future country, even a heavenly country, we are not distinctly told. It is likely however, he had respect to that meaning. It is certain from the Apostle's account of Abraham, that to Abraham's mind the promised land had that aspect. He certainly took that land to be the type of heaven. Nor can we doubt but that the same sentiment came down from Abraham to Isaac and Jacob. They had both dwelt with Abraham in tabernacles in the land of promise, as in a strange country. They had both been practised in the expectation of a country afar off, even a heavenly; they had both learned to look for a city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. If then in his wish to be buried in the family burying place Jacob had respect to the promise of the land, where the burying place was, in its first and literal

meaning, and in its secondary meaning, of the land, it was the type of, we easily apprehend the nature of Jacob's faith. We see, how strong it was, how prophetic, so to speak, it was. We remark him resting on a promise, after the manner it might almost be said, of his leaning on the top of his staff, of which the accomplishment, in its first and literal sense was very far off, and expressing by that action it might almost be said, of so leaning on his staff, his entire assurance, that that word of God would be fulfilled, that, though he was in Egypt, and all his family with him, and that family dependent on the bounty of others, a day would come, when they should inherit the land where the bodies of Abraham and Isaac were, and to which his body was about to be carried. We see him just in the jaws of death providing by this last dying act for the claim of his children to that land, the prospect of inheriting which must seem to every heart, but his own, nearly hopeless. We see him providing for the resting place of his body with an anxiety founded on the hope of a large blessing involved in it for his family, and on the assurance of the like resting place for himself, which his fathers Abraham and Isaac already had in heaven with their Mediator God.

On these two pieces of sacred history, which the text furnishes us with, we may now remark, how they are a two-fold specimen of faith. We learn from them how prophetic, so again to speak, faith is, how it has an eye, that looks through years, even through ages to come; how its eye can pierce through the things of time and sense, through the dark and thick veil of future time, or through the

covering, in which nature has covered us all up. We learn too, how a believer chuses only that, which God proposes for him to chuse, that he has no will of his own when God speaks his will to him. We learn too, in what the comforts of a believer lie; with what pleasure he contemplates the opening prospects of his Redeemer's kingdom, its glory and increase; how satisfied he is with the durable nature of God's covenant, how he triumphs, if the Church of Christ triumphs. We learn too, of what account he makes the promises of God, how he believes, they shall never fail, how he waits in silence for their fulfillment, how though they seem afar off, he can bring them close to his heart, can make them quite near. We see in the example of Jacob, when a dying, the example of the full assurance of faith.

What they, who do not believe, can learn from these pieces of history, it is painful to say. They can afford no instruction for them. How can they, who do not believe, profit by the believer's example? How can they sympathize with him? Their hearts being closed, though they seem to see, they have no eye to perceive with, and though they seem to hear, they have not the hearing ear. What shall then be said to them? Why, let it be this; let it be the prayer, that God would be pleased to give them the grace of faith. AMEN.

XIII.

THE FAITH OF JOSEPH.

HEBREWS xi. 22.

By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

It appears from the history of Joseph that he was from his youth up to old age a man of sincere and steady piety, that he was a true son of the family, he sprang from, faithful to God and to man in all his engagements and experiences of life. It will not then be any matter of wonder, if his last acts were done in faith, and his last speeches spoken in faith, at least such of his last acts and speeches, as were of a religious sort.

The text tells us of two things, on which Joseph dwelt in his last moments, one of them relating to the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and the other to the place of his burial. And, though such things do not necessarily in the first sound of them imply, that they are of a religious nature, yet, as the text also says, that these things were spoken in faith they must doubtless, if so spoken, be connected with religion; they must be of moment in

the concerns of the Church; they must in some way be connected with the state and interests of the Church of Christ.

Nor are there wanting other evidences, besides this of the text, that these things were in some way, so connected. In the account given of the call of Abraham it appears, that the promises, which drew him away from home and reconciled him to a new and distant settlement, contained amongst them the promise, that he and his seed after him should have for their inheritance this new land, even all of it. Abraham was also told at the same time, as we learn from the history, even at the very time of this promise, that his posterity should first fall into disastrous circumstances, should go out of the land he was then himself in, as heir of it, and be in a foreign land for years in slavish bondage, before they should have this inheritance.

How Joseph who, when he died, manifestly alluded to this prediction, which accompanied the promise, came to the knowledge of it, we are not informed. He might know it from inspiration, or from the tradition of it preserved in the family. In all probability however, he knew it from the latter source. He was, as we said, a true and faithful son of the family; he had been from his childhood the delight of his father and had surely learned the story of the covenant, and kept it.

We may then here see something of the nature of Joseph's faith. He remembered the prediction, which had been coupled with the promise, and, though he saw his brethren under his influence at the court of Pharaoh amongst the favoured subjects of the kingdom, yet he believed they would not be-

come settlers there, and, that they might not wish to become such, he told them, they were not to be such. He told them so, in dying, that they might remember his words the more, being dying words; he told them so in his dying farewell, that the impression might be the greater, that they might not be deceived by the prosperity and favor they had met with, under his government, that they might not think of making Egypt their country.

Whether he told them of the change that was to take place in their circumstances, after he was gone, does not appear. But it is likely he did because this change was a part of the prediction given to Abraham. It was plainly both by words and by emblem told to Abraham, that his posterity would be in a furnace of affliction for years, and Joseph, who knew one part of the prophecy, could not be ignorant of the other. He therefore admonished his brethren of their departure, that, when they were afflicted, they might remember his words, that in their bondage they might still have hope, that they might hate Egypt, and wish for Canaan. Joseph, who was a man of experience and wisdom and grace, doubtless, considered the matter much; he looked long before him, he had as we say, a long reach. And what was this long reach of his mind? He had in his view the preservation of an afflicted people, and an afflicted Church; he had in his view the hope and comfort of that Church. He set the example of a man, who found no rest in Egypt, who, though great in power and great in wealth, things which tempt men to think of a permanent establishment of their name and family, yet would not have his children live after him in Egypt,

would not have his name handed down in the annals of Egypt, as the patriot of Egypt, or even as a citizen of Egypt. This surely is faith. It is strong faith. It is faith against present appearances, by which men are so apt to be governed.

Joseph had been a great benefactor to Egypt. His family was also numerous and powerful. Himself and his family had strong claims on the gratitude of the people of Egypt, nor indeed had the King and the people shewn themselves unmindful of those services. They had honoured and enriched him, and had honoured and enriched his brethren, and it were reasonable for him to expect, that after his death his name and memory would still be cherished, and for his services' sake the like favour, as had hitherto been shewn, be continued to his descendants and kindred. However to this gratitude of the King and people, Joseph, when he was dying, paid no regard; to any memorials, they might keep of him, he had no respect. He looked to neither statue nor picture, which are the usual remembrancers of the hero and patriot. Though he had been the Saviour of Egypt, yet he would not have it for his country. He knew it was not his country, and dying, he confessed, it was not. He confessed, he sought another country. Though he had been long settled in it, though he had grown old there, though his children had all been born in it, and he had many ties of attachment to it, yet he disclaimed the soil, and taught his family to disclaim it. He taught his brethren, and all the future generations springing from them that were to be born in Eygpt, that they were to consider themselves, as strangers there. It was his dying instruction, that God had

provided for them also another country. Indeed, he went further than this in his dying lesson. That they might not forget what he had said, he *gave commandment concerning his bones;* he would not have even his bones to lie in Egypt for ever; he commanded his family, that when that day of their departure should come, they should carry away his very bones with them.

What the faith of Joseph had distinctly in view when he gave this commandment, cannot perhaps with certainty be told. He might, perhaps, mean no more, than by that commandment to make his dying lesson concerning the future departure of Israel the more impressive. He might, perhaps, mean no more, than to excite in his brethren a distaste for Egypt and a longing for Canaan; he might perhaps mean no more than by that his own example, set before them, even after his death, and always before them, to wean them from that attachment so natural in all to the place of their birth, and from those corruptions, which prevailed in Egypt, and which were so likely to wear out the remembrance of their own God and Saviour, even the remembrance of the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and of the promise and covenant, which that their God had made.

Yet perhaps, he meant more than this. For himself he declared by that commandment, how sacred he held the sentiment of his father, and his two other great forefathers concerning the land of Canaan, and what interpretation he put upon that sentiment, confessing, he was of the like mind with them and was a stranger in every country, except in that, and so confessing, like them, that he sought a hea-

venly country. He in this commandment, for himself declared, that heaven was his home, and, if this were so, which doubtless, we will now venture to say, it was, though we before said perhaps, it was, he taught his brethren and family, that they were to consider the promised land as shadowing forth a heavenly country, and were by their desire to be in Canaan to give proof of their faith in that other country, which was the final home, the final resting place of Israel. Joseph taught in this commandment concerning his bones, that the best evidence, an Israelite from home could give of his being a true Israelite, was by his zeal for the land of promise, and his longing to go there. Joseph taught how his faith had heaven ultimately in view.

There is, we know, to this day prevailing amongst the Jews generally much attachment to their ancient country, and doubtless, this attachment is founded in the ancient promise, and in the fulfillment of it. But then we also know, that there is to this day a mistaken notion also generally prevalent amongst them as to this very attachment, that their views towards their country, as they were of old in the time of the Saviour of a carnal sort, are still also carnal, that, as they did not then understand, to what their settlement in the land of promise had respect, so neither do they now, that, as they did not then understand the kingdom of the Messiah, into which the Jew was to be first called, to be the kingdom of heaven only, so neither do they now expect a Messiah with such a kingdom. They have lost the true interpretation of their own attachment to their ancient country; they have a patriotism, of

which they know not the true meaning and purport. They know not, that their Jerusalem was the type of the heavenly Jerusalem, and was, as such only, to be the city, from whence the new kingdom, the kingdom of heaven preached by Christ, was to take its rise and beginning. Strange to tell! they have no skill in the interpretation of Scriptures, they cherish so much; they have no skill in patriarchal doctrine; they hold no notion in common with the patriarchs, of whom they boast so much; they have no such sentiment, as this dying patriarch had, who would not suffer his bones to be in Egypt; prizing Canaan much they have no faith as he had, pointing to heaven.

How such blindness came, we need not tell. To those who read the Bible, there can be no obscurity, as to the causes of Jewish blindness. It will be a better employment for us Christians to consider, in what state we are, as to our information, and as to our faith, whether we, who are not blind Jews, be not blind Christians. It is possible we see for a Church to lapse into total ignorance and darkness, to lose the true interpretation of every doctrine. It is possible, that no care, no zeal, no lesson, however striking, and however contrived for to be long remembered can keep alive the true interpretation. It is possible for us, who are of a Church delivered out of Popish bondage by signs not soon to be forgotten, to become extremely forgetful of our principles, and to lose nearly, so to speak, our faith. There is in the heart of man a principle of apostacy darkening the understanding and hardening the heart. There is in us such an apostacy, that even

heaven itself shall be slightingly spoken of, and with some, be as a thing dreamed of, never to be realized.

We make the earth our home. We may remember, if we read the Bible, how much Egypt was to the children of Israel, as their home, how little they thought of the promise, which God had made to their fathers; how little of the land, they were to go to; how, when groaning in the most frightful slavery, they even refused to be delivered. And is it not so with us? Do we not many of us prefer earth to heaven? How little do we think of heaven, and of the promise, which is to carry us thither; though groaning in bondage to our lusts, and the world, how perverse are we, when deliverance is offered. We Englishmen say, we are free, and God forbid, we should not have a real, a substantial freedom to boast of. But then, though we are not political slaves, are not we slaves to the fashions of the world; do not the fashions of the world play the tyrant over us? Do we not bend to the customs of the world more than we ought, and even in opposition to the known will of God; do we not bend more than we ought, each man to his neighbour's humours, when to please our neighbour, is to displease God? We refuse for very trifling reasons to be delivered from even this bondage; we hug even such chains, as these, which it is a dishonour for a man to wear. We bid him, who would deliver us, stand aloof; we bid God, who calls, and his messenger, who calls, not to disturb our repose, not to loosen our chains.

We may also remember, if we read the Bible,

how after it had pleased God to accomplish an extraordinary deliverance for the children of Israel, there was still in them a heart for Egypt rather than Canaan. We will not mention, how they forgat the charge of our dying patriarch or their having his body with them, a memorial after death, of his faith in God. They forgat every other sign of the power and goodness of God; though protected with his special presence in the cloud and in the fire, they mistrusted, and would fain go back. And is it not so with us? Are not many of us sensible, there is a God, who can deliver us, and do not some make efforts, as if they would obey his call, and as if they were desirous of heaven? And do not many after such efforts, hesitate, and falter, and turn quite back? We will not mention, how they forget the examples and sayings of good men; how are lost upon them, the testimony, the dying good give of their faith, and the report, they give, of their hope of heaven. All other signs of God's goodness and power are forgotten. They will not read, they refuse to think. To read, were to read their own shame; to think, were to be troubled and confounded with their own sin and folly. It cannot be, but that in our journey through life to a future state, there should be the same sort of heart in us, the same temper, as appeared to be in the children of Israel, when they forsook Egypt to go to Canaan.

You, who are making for heaven, have enemies, proud enemies, to threaten you; they are enemies close behind you, and their threats are loud; they are ready to spoil and enslave you. And it is not

easy for you to believe, that your Christ is at hand, and will save you. Your road also lies through a wilderness, for the world is to you a barren place, and it is not easy to believe, though a mighty deliverance has been already accomplished, that the same deliverer, your Christ, will condescend to relieve your private wants; that he, who does the great things for you, will do the little, that he who confers great will confer also little blessings. It is not easy to believe, that his Comforter will come to your hearth, and will feed and clothe you and your children.

There is in the best a mistrusting, backsliding heart. Yet, though doomed to die in the wilderness, if you be sincerely making for heaven, you shall certainly reach your home; you shall overcome the toil of your journey; you shall be fed on the way with the bread of heaven; you shall drink on the way the water from the rock, that follows you, which is Christ; and you shall have no regret in the thought, that your body is to be put in the cold grave and is to moulder into dust.

Here my speech is for you, who believe. I ought to have a speech for those, who believe not, for too certain alas, it is, that all do not believe. All, who were of Israel, were not, as we read, of the true Israel. Are all who appear to be of the church, true Christians? Such as are not, are to note the end of the false Israelites; how they fell under many a judgment, while they travelled in company with the true. They are to note, how the murmurers fell; how the rebels perished; how they, who belied the

good land were reproved and punished. They are to note, that, if there be mercy, there is also wrath, that Christ who can save, can also destroy, that he, who can send ministers of grace, can employ ministers of vengeance, can send an angel to smite, and a serpent to hurt and to kill.

XIV.

THE FAITH OF THE PARENTS OF MOSES.

HEBREWS xi. 23.

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the King's commandment.

Of this matter, which is mentioned in the text, there is not in the old Testament, to the account in which it refers, so distinct and so full a statement given, as to enable us to judge at the first reading, what was the object of faith, which the parents of Moses had, when they hid their son not fearing the King's command. That they had such an object, cannot be doubted, because it is said, that what they did to their son, they did in faith, and did it not fearing the vengeance of a tyrant, which was certainly a proof of a strong act of faith, there being so much to fear, but then there is apparently a want of information, to what their faith pointed.

It will not be thought satisfactory to say, that it was probably the same object, as is very much referred to in instances of faith given by the Apostle in the preceding part of this chapter, particularly

in the instance of Joseph given in the verse just before. The object I mean, is the promise of the country of Canaan so frequently made to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the promise, with which that is connected, as making in strictness, with it but one promise, of the other country, of which Canaan was the type and shadow, namely, the heavenly country. It will indeed be allowed, that in the instance of Joseph's faith the object is not distinctly stated ; there is some obscurity in the case, as given by the Apostle and the real object is only made out by implication, by a careful consideration of the terms, and what they remotely, and as from a distance aim at. But then it will be said on the other hand, that in this instance of the faith of the parents of Moses, there is but very little, if any thing at all, in the terms themselves to lead us to such a meaning and it will be added, that the two instances being distinct from each other, though they happen to stand together in the chapter, may have different objects of faith. It may be said, and with a shew of reason, that the context is here no help.

Nor shall we, as we need not, dispute this way of reasoning. The two instances of faith are certainly distinct, and may have distinct objects. We shall however, suggest for consideration, that the religious sentiments of Joseph, who brought the children of Israel into Egypt, and who for so many years was so powerful a guardian and protector to them in their residence there, were in all probability much made of by all, who amongst the Hebrews kept the faith of the patriarchs, and amongst such Hebrews by these parents of Moses, if they were such. We

shall besides further suggest, that of these his sentiments there was a perpetual memorial preserved in the preservation of his body for the express purpose of being carried out of Egypt into the land of Canaan to the patriarchal sepulchre, whenever the time should come for the children of Israel to go up there.

As it will not be thought satisfactory to connect together these two cases, the case of Joseph and the case of the parents of Moses, though they are certainly cases which make parts of one peculiar period in the history of the children of Israel, so neither will it be thought satisfactory to say, that there was something in the appearance of Moses at his birth, which prompted the parents to hide him, and which was in some sort, a foundation or an aid to their faith. Doubtless, there might be something in this his appearance. The expression in the text is very remarkable, and it is the same here, as it is in the 2nd chapter of Exodus, brought here, no doubt, from that chapter and the expression is made still more remarkable in the 7th chapter of the Acts, where, as is to be seen in the original, the name of God is introduced, as if to denote, that God was the author of this appearance. In all the three places, the exceeding fairness of the child at his birth is touched on, as if it prompted the parents to do, as they did.

Perhaps however, we are not to give much importance to this appearance of the child, though unquestionably the times in which he was born, were the times, in which God was pleased much to use external signs or symbols, in order to awaken and animate the faith of the faithful, and though we

certainly know, that children have even in the womb given tokens of grace, and as certainly also know, that it was not unusual in the history of extraordinary men, during these times, which are the times before the coming of Christ, to tell of singular appearances, like to proofs of favour from heaven, often no doubt, feigned or fabled, attending the birth or infancy of such men.

It will give more satisfaction on this subject to consider the conduct of Pharaoh, and the conduct of Moses, of Pharaoh playing the savage politic tyrant, and of Moses attempting before the appointed time to make himself into the Captain and Leader or Prince of the Hebrew nation.

Out of the mouth of Pharaoh we hear these words addressed unto his nation; *Behold the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we, come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.* Which language, when we consider it, what does it shew, but that he well understood the disposition and views of the Israelites, that he was aware of the notion prevalent amongst them of a deliverer arising from amongst themselves, and that on the first favourable opportunity they would cast off his yoke, and leave Egypt in search of the promised land. After this language, which shews his counsels, he then adopted the conduct, which policy suggested, and perhaps the only conduct, though of the most savage sort, that could be adopted. As if he expected they would go from him, he determines to get the most profit, he could, out of their services;

he increases their bondage and their labour; and then as if he were resolved, they should not go, he tries to depress them into the most abject state, so as to break their spirit, and to hinder, if possible, their ever having a deliverer born to them he enjoins the murder of every male child. He took that step, which another tyrant in a subsequent age took to destroy the other Prince of the Jews, who was born their deliverer also in that age. We cannot but remember the policy and cruelty of Herod to the infants of Bethlehem, and we see in Pharaoh the same, having also the same ends in view. What will not a love of power do for men; to what desperate strokes of policy will not tyrants have recourse; what a heart of steel have they, when they can issue an order for an universal murder! But we need not say much on these points. All history profane as well as sacred tells every reader these things.

When we look at the conduct of Moses, we see him attempting before the appointed time, the deliverance of his brethren. We say, before the appointed time, because it was certainly an unsanctified attempt. He certainly ran, before he was called to the work. Had he not so ran, he had not done a deed of murder. He had after a wonderful escape from death in his infancy been brought up in the court of Pharaoh, under the protection and as the child, of the King's daughter. He was as a Prince in that court. He had also great talents and had acquired much learning. He also well knew the expectation entertained in the court itself of a deliverer's being about to arise for the children of

Israel. If Pharaoh knew it, he could not but also know it, particularly, as he was no stranger to his birth, and no stranger to his parents, he having been nursed in the lap of his own mother, who, we are sure, if she were like all other mothers, and indeed like what she ought to be, would keep no such secrets from him, as the promise of the land of Canaan, and the promise of a deliverer.

On all these accounts we readily apprehend how Moses came to make the attempt. He would, we might say, fain be a Prince. He might doubtless, have honourable motives. He doubtless, pitied his brethren, and felt for their wrongs. He might too hope, he was to be their deliverer. He had friends in the court of the King; he could effect as much in the cause of his brethren, as any one, or more than any one else could, and the sufferers were doubtless ready to rebel by thousands. But then it is clear, there was ambition also at the bottom ; for his ambition's sake, he could do as other Princes are apt to do, he could do a deed of murder. For the sake of ingratiating himself with the people he could do, as other Princes are apt to do, violate one of the plainest commands of God.

However, his policy failed, his ambition was disappointed. The murder, he had done, and the cause, he had done it in, became known in the court, and he was obliged to flee from the jealousy and vengeance of the King. He was sent by God for his sin from the court into the wilderness. He was sent into poverty and exile, in which he remained forty years. What happened to him in his banishment, we need not say. He doubtless, there learned re-

pentance and humility; he doubtless there learned meekness, even what is not a common art in policy, the art of meekness in government.

We shall return from these considerations on the conduct of Pharaoh and Moses to the result, we chiefly found upon them, as to the faith of the parents of Moses, namely, what was its object, when they hid him, not fearing the King's commandment. And it appears almost satisfactorily out of these considerations, that as their faith was the same as the patriarchs had before them, particularly, that it was the same, as the Patriarch Joseph had so much exemplified in his death, when he spake just about to expire, of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones. It appears, that it was faith in the promise of the land of Canaan, as the land they were to go to for their own, that it was faith in the promise of a deliverer, who should lead them and their brethren to that land, and, as involved in this faith, that it was also faith in that land and that deliverer, of which Canaan and the expected deliverer were the types, that it was faith in the heavenly country which was to be their's for ever, and in the deliverer, who was to guide them safely thither, and be there their Prince for ever.

If it should be said, that this their faith was not faith in Christ, faith in whom is the very essence of faith, to this we answer, that faith in the promise of the land of Canaan must be faith also in him, who made that promise; it must be faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; it must be faith in him, so called, as being the covenant God, the God making covenant with man, and, if that God of

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were our Christ, who after their days made his appearance to us distinctly in our flesh, which he certainly was, then their faith was as substantially faith in Christ, as ours is. Their faith in their deliverer, who was to guide them to Canaan, takes into its very nature faith in that other deliverer, who was in after ages to come, and who was to be their true undisguised guide to heaven, to the land of everlasting rest, of everlasting unalloyed happiness.

If it be said, as it has been, that the faith of these parents of Moses failed, when they exposed the child on the water, to this we answer, that it failed greatly, but not entirely. Nor do we make this answer, because we know from revelation that the faith of the saints shall never entirely fail, that they shall assuredly, once believing, always to the end believe. But we make this answer, because it appears from the story, how they still hoped, though they seemed to have cast away their hope. It appears from the conduct of the daughter, who watched the floating ark, in which the child was put, that, though through dread of the King's command they seemed to have given up the child to death, they were waiting in faith for an act of the providence of God. There might be in this unbelief and presumption, and cowardice, but there was still a little faith, though little as a grain of mustard seed; and, if there was any thing in the circumstances of his birth beyond the extraordinary beauty of the child, if any thing in it denoting a special token of divine favour beyond the goodly and fair face of the child, the parents in this case had reason, notwithstanding the distrust for their own safety

shewn in exposing the child, to believe, God would even now deliver him from the drowning of the waters, and God did deliver him.

There is, we may now add, something in this story, that perhaps, will interest us. It is a family story, and as such, may even interest us, though as the story of a pious family, it is certainly intended to do so. It is intended to shew, into what distress a pious family may be brought for a trial of their faith, and how that family keeping their faith, though tried with great fears, still found relief from their faith. It may be turned into an useful lesson for all such families, if there be such families amongst us. Such families are very rare things in the world. True Christians are too frequently to be found alone, by themselves, one of a family, or two of a family. However, the story may be useful for these solitary Christians. It shews, that if there be faith, though it be but weak, matters shall turn out right at last, that even mountains of difficulty shall be removed. It shews, that there is no counsel against the purpose of God to deliver and to save, It shews, that the fury of a tyrant in the height of his power is of no avail against that purpose; that the counsels of the most crafty and savage politician shall be defeated, even perhaps, when he least looks for defeat, if they be directed against that purpose.

It is the purpose of God to deliver and save his chosen people, and out of the snare they shall come. They shall come out of the bondage of Egypt; they shall be delivered out of the bondage of sin, and from the tasks, which sin imposes; they shall be delivered from the yoke of Satan, that hard task-

master, and from the yoke of the world, that is perhaps, a more merciless and hard task-master, than the Devil himself. The Devil indeed is always about us, but then he is so in secret. The world is always too about us, but then the world is openly so. And what does the world require of us? It openly and unblushingly requires our love.

Do we believe in our deliverer? Then let us come out from the world, and follow him, wherever he goes before us. He went before the ancient people of God to Canaan, and he has gone before us to heaven.

XV.

THE FAITH OF MOSES.

HEBREWS xi. 24.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

When we consider the conduct of Moses at his first appearance in public life, it is clear he was actuated by the opinion then prevalent in Egypt, that the time was now not far off for the children of Israel to quit that country, and go to the country promised, which was Canaan. It is likewise plain from the conduct of Pharaoh in oppressing the Israelites that he was prompted by this notion, and, if it were known to the King, it must be known to his court, and to the Princes of his court, of whom Moses was, as one, and as one too, often near his person, being as a son of the King's own daughter. Moses too, had learned this sentiment from his real parents, and being thus acquainted with it he had doubtless, when he came out, as a public character, acting the part, we read he did towards his suffering brethren, faith in this notion.

It must indeed be allowed, he was actuated at the same time by motives of another sort, some of

them innocent enough, and others not so. He knew his own origin, and he was moved with sympathy for his suffering brethren, and perhaps, he was moved the more with it, because he knew the purpose, which was in the mind of the King, to hinder by their sufferings their deliverance, and because thinking the time to be at hand for their release, he held them to be the peculiar people of God, chosen from amongst all other people. But he was also actuated by other motives not so good, as these. There was ambition at the bottom; there was an aim at popularity amongst a numerous, and, because they were numerous, a powerful nation; there was a desire to ingratiate himself with them, that their favour might be a step to power, to his being their leader in their expected deliverance and march out of Egypt. There may be, we may pause here to reflect, in the breast of a man, who is unquestionably actuated by good intentions, and maintains good principles, a debasing alloy of bad intentions and bad principles. There may be where there is true faith in God and his promises, a something that shall blot, we will not say, marr that faith. Religion may sometimes be made a step in the ladder, by which even a throne is mounted. Have we not heard and read of such a thing, as this?

Had there not been this alloy in the views of Moses at his first coming out into public action, he had not, as we are sure he did from the date mentioned in the promise, run before he was called; he had not tried to hasten and hurry on, so to speak, the providence of God; he had not ventured on a deed of murder. We may however, if we have the power of discriminating and separating, which we

doubtless have, draw out of the good part of Moses's views and character a profitable lesson. Nor is there any impropriety in making this discrimination. We are sure, it is a thing, that it is always to be done with respect to us all, when our characters come to be sifted. When we come to die, and are spoken of in the way of praise or blame, though there be something to be said in the way of praise, there will certainly be something also to be said in the way of blame, and perhaps, justly enough. Nor has the Scripture, which speaks here so highly of the faith of Moses, any other design than that we should draw from this account of him a profitable lesson. Dropping the fault, dropping the blame-worthy part, it calls us to the contemplation of the praise-worthy; it bids us look at the glorious effects of his faith.

What the object of his faith was, we need not repeat, excepting perhaps, as things need often to be repeated by the preacher, that we may just say, it had for its object the promised land of Canaan, and, as intended by that, the heavenly country, the last *recompence*, as it is expressed here, *of reward*.

The effect of his faith was, that he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. It is almost needless to say, how great a sacrifice he in this refusal made of comfort, of honour and power. We all know, how much the generality of men would value such a situation, as Moses was in. There was the fondness of the King's own daughter to give up; there were all those flatteries to give up, which would in a King's court attend on one treated, as her son. There was the pride of power to give up, that pride, which so much swells the heart, which so much loves to be gazed at and admired, which

so much delights in the cringing and the crouching of others. Nor was this all, that was contained in this refusal. By it he at once bluntly declared himself against the counsels of the King. The counsels of the King were to degrade and debase the people of Israel, to crush their spirit, to break their heart, and in breaking their heart to extinguish their desire to leave Egypt for Canaan, and to make them sure and profitable bond slaves. But by this refusal Moses declared himself a Hebrew, and in so doing, declared himself at once against the designs of the King.

How in declaring himself against the designs of the King he took an open part immediately against them, we read in his early history, and we have said something before on this point. We said, how ambition mixed itself with his honourable motives, how he acted without a specific call from God, and how transgressing in the outset and disappointed he was obliged to fly the country. He could not stir the people he wished to rouze; he could not, so brutish and impotent were they become, awaken their feelings or their faith and he fled, though his faith supported him under the frown of it, before the wrath of the King. It was however, no mean act of faith, that he should thus declare himself a Hebrew, and take part with his brethren renouncing the favour and smiles of the court. Though he mistook his call and the time; though he transgressed being guilty of a most violent outrage, which had no palliation, but the oppression, which maketh even wise men mad, it was still a noble effort, to risk all his comforts, his freedom, and even his life, in forsaking and declaring against the court in the

cause of men so cruelly treated, as his brethren were. Nor does the Scripture, which never represents her saints, her best disciples, as perfect, give any other account of it. The text and the context say it was in faith, that he renounced the court, that he chose *rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;* that he esteemed *the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward;* that *he forsook Egypt not fearing the wrath of the King, for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.*

From which description we may now pass to these reflections; and first, if we bear in mind, what we have read or heard or seen of Kings' courts we cannot but consider his conduct, as displaying a glorious act of faith in the promise of God. They that are in Kings' palaces wear gay clothing. A King's palace is indeed the house of pride. There is the gilded hall, and lofty tower. There princes are in sumptuous shew. There lords and ladies set themselves out in shining array, each, to the admiration or envy of the others. There is idleness, which even a poet calls "the nurse of sin," that, as the same poet goes on to speak, "can scarce uphold his heavy head, to looken whether it were night or day." There also is gluttony, "that swallows up excessive feast." There is lust, of whom the same poet describing him as a person says, let us mark the words, "He well can dance." There is avarice, of whom the same poet describing him too as a person, let us also mark these words, says, that "unto hell himself for money sells" that "right and wrong alike in equal balance weighs." There

is envy, that "hates all good works and virtuous deeds*. There is revenge, that can do evil without fear of punishment, that repents not, not even of blood. From all this pride and gaiety, from all this pomp and riot, Moses fled. He had been bred to it, but he now fled from it. Nor was this the whole, he fled from. From all this in the very manliness of his nature he might turn aside with disgust. But he had been nurtured also in the idleness of the court. He had been at the feast, at the dance, and what the nature of man loves still more, he had been taught to take his fill of pleasure without controul; to do wrong or right as he thought fit; to be revengeful and have no remorse; nay, not to repent even of murder. Yet from all this licence of lust and power, that would be a bait and a snare for the very manliness of his nature, he fled away. We need not, I may here add, envy princes. The Scripture says, *not many mighty, not many noble are called*, and we now see, why. They who can do as they list, in this world, or think they can, are not very likely to be confessors of Christ.

If secondly we consider the change in his situation, we cannot but hold his choice of that change to be a glorious act of faith in God's promise. He adopted in exchange for a King's court *the affliction of the people of God*. We have all of us, doubtless, read or heard or seen something of the people of God, what they so called, are, at least, we have heard or read something, if we have read or remarked what is in the Bible about the people, here specially intended and so called, the Hebrews then in Egypt, and as to this particular people, we can-

* Spenser's Fairy Queen, B. I. C. IV.

not but know, in what a low condition they were, in what misery and bondage. Yet in exchange for a King's court Moses chose to be their companion and brother. He risked being their brother in suffering. Perhaps, indeed, he risked more, than that. It was not for him to go down into the poverty, the hardships, and bondage, in which they were. He had been as a prince, and he had become, as the court would say, a traitor. Of a fallen prince the lot seldom is, that he should live after his fall, and to be sure, as Moses had by a deed of murder given a handle to the charge of the court, it could not be, that he should be permitted to live. The exchange then, which he made for the court, was even more than loss of comfort and pleasure. They indeed were the first things he resigned. To resign them, was his first choice, and though it is plain, he weighed the matter well, though he calculated and took the balance between affliction and pleasure, between affliction, that was in the end to have pleasure, and the pleasure that was but for a season, that was after a season to be woe everlasting, yet was not this his first choice something? He soon however, found, he had chosen more than this. He had rendered himself the object of the vengeance of the King, even unto death.

It may perhaps be said, they were the pleasures of sin, he gave up, which were but for a season, and have a sting in them, even in this world, even in the midst of the enjoyment. But then in saying this are we not ourselves condemned? I would not put this question, did I not know, that thousands, with their eyes open to both consequences, chuse the pleasures of sin, that are but for a season, that have

even a sting in them here, and a sure sting in them in the next world, in preference to *suffering, and self denial,* that are also but for a season, and that are surely to be followed by the recompence of everlasting delight.

The pleasures of sin were not the only things, Moses gave up. He gave up riches. He chose *reproach,* as his treasure, and it ought to be carefully noticed, that the reproach he chose, was the reproach of religion. He merited other reproach and that justly. He merited it, if there was anything seditious in his conduct, though that may be questioned, the children of Israel being detained unjustly in Egypt, but certainly he merited even more than that for his deed of murder. But he had also to sustain a reproach which was not justly merited. He had to sustain that which in truth, recoils on the upbraider making the upbraider indeed guilty. He had to bear from the men of the world, from the men of pleasure, from the men of the King's court, the reproach of folly or madness for being attached to the God of heaven and earth, who was their God, as well as his, for serving and fearing the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who was that God and the only Saviour of all men. He had to bear this from old companions, and not common companions; he had to bear the scorn and hatred of the King, and the Princes. He was no longer for their purposes. He had become the friend of God, the friend of man, the friend of his helpless brethren, and he was no longer suited for the purposes of the King and his courtiers. He must fly for his murder, but he must also fly for his religion. For the one they had justice on their side; they had a true plea; but, as

they who live in the court of a despot, care generally little for murder, this true plea was the cover only for the other; it was substantially but a pretext for malice and persecution.

It may be thought easy to bear the reproach of persons in humble life on account of religion, though this is not quite so easy, as some may think. But then it will not be thought so easy to bear the reproach of Princes. Persons in humble life have commonly no power, but the power of the tongue. Yet how terrifying sometimes, is this power! How fearful are we apt to be of what our neighbours will say of us; how anxious are we apt to be to stand well with them! If then Kings and Princes reproach we know well their meaning. They have courtiers ready to serve them; they have about them those, who so to speak, wrap up their sayings and keep them for future use and service. If Kings and Princes reproach a man, let that man be on his guard, let him be prepared to suffer.

It was this reproach, the most terrible of all, especially in the government of a tyrant, that Moses chose. He was doubtless a man of courage, but if he shewed it in any thing, he shewed it in chusing this, for, to prove the terrible nature of this reproach, even Almighty God, who can do all things, did not bring him back again after his flight, though he meant to make him the deliverer of his people, till he could encourage the deliverer himself by these words; *All the men are dead, which sought thy life.**

Allow me now to add in conclusion these three points of instruction; of which the first shall be;

* Exodus iv. 19.

that there may be blemishes in the character of a Christian. Perfection is sometimes in a loud tone, though not the more sincere for being loud, demanded of those who make the religion of Christ their main concern. But then we have here a great man, who in the outset at least, of his religious profession, was not a little faulty, on whose sincerity and zeal, at least in the first appearance of them, there is written much blame.

The second point shall be; that God can chastize his servants for their sins. The best, it is plain, can sin, yet it is as plain, that their God, he who is their real Saviour, spares not their sins. He does not indeed destroy them for ever; to do that his unchangeable, covenanted love forbids. But then he can appoint them a rod for chastisement; he can raise up a child in the house to afflict them; he can send them into banishment and poverty; he can make them drink the cup of bitterness for years together.

The third and last point shall be, what faith with all our faults can do for us; what courage, what self-denial it can inspire us with; how it can make us fearless of the frowns and regardless of the smiles of the world; how it can make us resign, what is generally so much the desire of the heart to keep, the love and approbation of our neighbours, and the support and countenance of friends. It can make us give up for Christ, *pleasure*, *honour*, *pomp* and *wealth*. It can make us think nothing of the favour of a King, or of a King's son, or of a King's daughter.

XVI.

THE FAITH OF MOSES.

HEBREWS xi. 28.

Through faith he kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.

It is almost unnecessary to mention, that the person, whose faith is spoken of in the Text, is the great lawgiver of the people of Israel, who in the appointment of Providence led them out of Egypt. His name had just before been given, as also a part of his history, specially that part, which records his acts of faith. The text directs us to another of his acts. *Through faith he kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood lest he that destroyed the first born should touch them.*

We know from the new Testament, that the passover was a type of the sacrifice of Christ, that the paschal lamb was a type of that other better lamb, so called probably from the lambs of the old Testament and perhaps chiefly from this very paschal offering. And certainly it appears from the account of the institution, and from the text, which briefly repeats that account, that the passover was designed

to avert the divine vengeance, which was clearly the design of the sacrifice of that other better lamb, of the offering of Christ upon the cross. But then, as the vengeance, which was averted by the passover was limited in its object, it being the death only of the first born, which was averted by the blood, it does not at first sight appear, that the faith of Moses through which *he kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood,* had respect to the sacrifice of Christ, which it must either directly or indirectly have in order to be true faith, for that sacrifice is designed to avert the future everlasting destruction of the sinners of mankind.

If it be said, that the passover in averting the death of the first born of each family, averted from each family a heavy weight of affliction and grief, we must allow it did. But then that species of affliction is not at all the suffering, which is averted by the sacrifice of the cross. In considering the vengeance, which was averted in either case, the comparison can only be between the death of the first born, and the future everlasting destruction of the sinners of mankind, and if so, the faith of Moses had before its view but a very obscure intimation of the benefit of the blood of the cross. He could at the most learn from the Passover this lesson, that deliverance from future everlasting destruction was to be by a bloody sacrifice. Doubtless Moses had had long before this time more copious and more clear instruction, than was to be learned in such a lesson, as this. It appears from his very history as given before the text, that his knowledge went far beyond this obscure intimation. He is said in faith to have *endured, as seeing Him, that is invisible.* He is also said in

faith to have esteemed *the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.* He had plainly therefore had in his former acts of faith a distinct object before him. He had had in each of them, even before his view the very Jehovah with whom he had long held converse; he had had in each of them, the very Angel of the covenant, who is our very Christ and his and our very Redeemer before his view, and though it might be said, that his former faith would come in aid of the faith he now exercised in this darker intimation, and though there be no harm in saying this, it being very true that such is not seldom the case with true believers, a darker point of knowledge being with them not seldom an object of faith, because they have already had clearer points before them, yet as the act of faith in the text is separated distinctly from the former acts, we may possibly, if we examine the matter a little more nearly, make out also as distinct an object for his faith here as any he had before had.

In the first place, it is to be considered, that this destruction of the first-born here mentioned was the last of those plagues or judgments, which having in view the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt were inflicted on the Egyptians. The others, which had had the same things in view, had failed, but this this was to be that, which should not fail. It was to be the stroke, which should break the pride of Pharaoh, and loosen the gripe of his avarice. It was to be the stroke, which, when heard, should make all tremble, friends as well as foes, both those, on whose behalf it was struck, as well as those, who were stricken by it. Doubtless, it was a terrible

stroke taking away the dearest pledge from every family and even from the kingdom itself. It was the stroke, which was next to that which should strike the Lord and Master himself of every house, and the Lord and Master himself of the palace of the kingdom. Surely it was fitting, that even they who were to be delivered by it, should hide themselves from it beneath the shelter of atoning blood sprinkled on the door-posts of their houses. Surely it was in faith, that the Israelites so feared God in this display of his avenging power, though they knew it was not to hurt them. Surely it is in faith, when we also so fear God in the display of his avenging power on the cross, though we know when taking refuge there, we too are to sustain no hurt. Though we tremble beneath the cross, as we may well do, considering our sins, and Him, that was stricken for their sake, yet coming to that cross, we shall be safe from harm. There is doubtless, always fear in faith, though our faith always chears us and saves us from what we fear.

In the next place, it is to be considered, that this last plague or judgment was distinctly and specially the act of God himself. The preceding judgments were indeed themselves the act of God and only his, but then they were not so specially his as this was, nor so distinctly. The preceding judgments were inflicted by the ministry of Moses. They had had, some of them at least, the appearance of being the work of Moses. The magicians, whom Pharaoh had called in to oppose him, had at least treated some of them, as his. But then this judgment had no such appearance; it was inflicted, after Moses had quitted the presence of Pharaoh for the last time, and

with the declaration made in anger, that he would not appear in the court any more. It was clearly inflicted by the hand of God itself acting by itself. When therefore we view this judgment in this light, we see at once, there was need of a Mediator, to preserve even the Israelites themselves from it. The Israelites, while in Egypt, were a part of the people of Egypt; they were a part of the subjects of Pharaoh; they were a part of his nation, of his power and his wealth. Though they were ultimately intended to be a people under the government of God, though in his counsels, they were even soon to be a separate nation under him, as their King, yet they were not at this time such. They were, being on the soil of Egypt, still as Egyptians, still as Pharaoh's people. They were of necessity to suffer with the nation, of which they were a part, were not a Mediator provided for them. In the preceding judgment they had had a mediator, and had been protected; they had had Moses for their mediator; they had had him, who was the type of Christ, the type of our great Mediator, standing between them and God, and they had so escaped all the preceding plagues. But now in this last they had not Moses for a mediator. Moses, who had hitherto been the minister employed to punish the King and to protect Israel, had given up for a season his employment; he had given up the contest with the King; the judgments, he had carried to him, as it were in his hands, had not prevailed to soften or to terrify, and he had now in the vexation of disappointment and anger left the deliverance of Israel to God himself. He was at this critical time no mediator for Israel, and for this

last judgment God was pleased to provide another Mediator. God, who always makes the work of mercy his own work, was now pleased to specially make it such. As the judgment to be inflicted was now distinctly his own, so was he now pleased to make the deliverance distinctly so too. If he be pleased at any time to use the arm of flesh, yet he trusts not in it, nor would he now use it. He now seeming for a while to set Moses aside provides himself the atoning, the mediating Lamb; he now delivers the people, who were to be his own, by his own arm; he now, at the despairing crisis delivers them by his own act of mercy and of grace; he now himself commands *the sprinkling of blood*, that he might pass over and save.

We took notice in an early part of this discourse of an obscurity, which seemed at the first reading to hang over the object in this instance of the faith of Moses; but then at the same time we held out the expectation, that on a nearer examination of the case we might possibly make out as distinct an object as in any other instance, which is recorded of his faith; and perhaps from these considerations we have offered, it becomes tolerably clear, what that object was, and that it is as distinct, as any other, nay, perhaps more distinct, than any other in the religious history of Moses. The object was the sacrifice, which was the type of the future sacrifice of Christ, and that sacrifice was quite as distinct in its intention, as any such sacrifice under the old Testament, and indeed more distinct than any such, we there are told of, or which any believer under that dispensation had for his faith to look to, because the avenging Angel inflicting death is formally in-

troduced, and the blood is formally stated, as the blood of interposition between the people and his vengeance. Nor ought we to omit mentioning, it being a point much for the confirmation of what we say, in how great veneration the Passover was ever held in the Jewish Church throughout all ages down to the very death of Christ itself, and how the time of the Passover was chosen by God himself above all other religious seasons for the time of the sacrifice of the last and best Lamb of the Jewish dispensation, the Lamb, who was the Lamb of God, and was God's own Son.

Allow me now in conclusion to make these remarks. And first, it pleased God, we plainly see, to draw the attention of mankind in the first ages of the world to the sacrifice of blood and in the case before us we cannot mistake why he did so. The Paschal sacrifice was clearly the sacrifice of atonement. Nor has the conduct of God been different in these our ages. He still draws our attention to the like sacrifice and he has now done so in a more distinct manner, than heretofore. *Jesus Christ*, to use the language of the Apostle to one of his Churches, *hath been evidently set forth crucified amongst us*. Shall we then seek for any other mode of acceptance, than through his blood? Shall we devise or profess to devise any other method of salvation, than by his atonement? If we should be inclined to do so and certainly some, such as the Socinian and Papist, are inclined to do so, is not that a mistake, and may it not be a fatal mistake? Without the interposition of blood the people of Israel would, as we learn in this history, have been smitten in their houses by the destroying Angel.

Shall we be safe, if we refuse the expiation of the blood of Christ? Will not a worse vengeance come, if like the Socinian, we despise that blood, or if like the Papist, we practically despise it? And may not we, who are neither Socinians nor Papists, despise it? May not we, if not in words, yet in heart despise it, or in practice bespeaking us to be employed in seeking other modes of acceptance, which indicate reliance on our own goodness, and not on the interposing blood of the only Mediator?

Secondly, we may learn from this history, that the ordinances of religion are to be attended in faith. We are to pray in faith both in public and in private; we are to pray with our thoughts directed to the Lamb on the cross; we are to come to Church in faith; we are to hear in faith the word of God read and preached; we are in faith to bring our children to the baptismal font, and to this exhortation I would now particularly and emphatically add, that, as the Passover approaches nearer than any other Jewish ordinance to the Lord's Supper, which we keep in memory of the blood shed and of the body broken of our better Lamb, and, as that Jewish ordinance was first kept in faith, and was ever afterwards to be so kept, we are to come in faith to that Supper.

XVII.

THE FAITH OF MOSES AND THE NATION OF ISRAEL ON PASSING THROUGH THE RED SEA.

HEBREWS xi. 29.

By faith they passed through the red sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

When Pharaoh King of Egypt gave consent, as appears from the book of Exodus, he did, that the children of Israel should entirely quit Egypt, he by that act entirely relinquished his right of sovereignty over them. What were his motives for giving it up, it is hardly necessary to ask. As appears from the same book of Exodus, he did not give it up but in compliance with his fears. He at last learned by a severe experience, that Almighty God, who put in a claim of sovereignty counter to his was resolved to prosecute that claim to the uttermost, even to the destruction of him and the people, he governed, and then he gave it up.

It is not to our present purpose to enquire into the pretensions of Pharaoh. They were doubtless the usual pretensions of pride, ambition, and avarice,

which made him forget, what however, he very well knew that, though he might seem to have a right in the ancient and original surrender of Jacob and his family into the hands of the Kings of Egypt, yet that surrender was accompanied with a reserved right anciently and originally also acknowledged at the time of the surrender and even at this time acknowledged by himself. The Kings of Egypt were but the temporary guardians, as they knew, of the subjects of another King, who now gave notice of his intention to enforce his reserved claim. *Let my people go,** was the message from God to Pharaoh.

It is more to our purpose to remark the conduct of Almighty God on this occasion, how upon Pharaoh's openly relinquishing his pretensions he then openly himself came forward, and we might almost say, shewed himself openly to his people, as their King. He had before this occasion appeared only to Moses in secret converse; he had hitherto sent messages only by him to the people and to Pharaoh, giving secret encouragement to the one to expect a deliverance from slavery, and with the other negotiating, to be allowed the phrase, in his court for that deliverance. But now on the full acknowledgment of his sovereignty on the part both of the people of Egypt and their King, he appeared at the head of the armies of Israel, as they marched out of the country; he appeared, distinctly known by tokens to be there, in that, which the Scripture calls a pillar of a cloud and of fire; he thus appeared as we may speak, in the van, directing the march of his own host.

* Exodus v. 1.

We learn from the history, that the other King, for so we may call Pharaoh, soon repented of the concession, he had made, and that preparing a formidable army he pursued the Israelites in their march, in order to bring them back into their former state of subjection. What his motives were for breaking his engagement, we are not told. They were probably the same, as those, which had before prompted him to oppress and trample on the people, and to defy the vengeance of their God, now again prevailing over his fears, especially when he perceived the apparently unprotected state, in which they departed, and the apparent mistake of their leader, who conducted the retreat. In the apparent helplessness of the people he probably saw them again an easy prey to his power. What will not pride, ambition and avarice do for the man, in whose heart they are? They will make him do deeds of shame, nor only those, but deeds also of folly. They will not only harden his heart, but they will blind his understanding. They will not only make him, forgive the plainness of the language, I speak of shameful vices, pride, ambition and avarice, a rogue, but they will also make him a fool.

We have alluded to the apparently unprotected state, in which the children of Israel quitted Egypt, and certainly it must have appeared to be such, both to their leader and the people themselves. They had been for years in such habits as slaves are wont to be, and we well know what such habits are, and what is their effect on the temper, and on the courage. Nor did they possess any riches, but such as were borrowed of the Egyptians at the moment of their departure, and such, as were rea-

dily lent them in acknowledgement of Him, who called them his own people, and had claimed them as such, at their hands by overpowering irresistible evidence. Nor indeed is the fact of their helplessness disallowed by Almighty God himself, who told Moses not to lead them directly to Canaan, though it were the country, which was promised them for a kingdom to settle in, because they were as yet unfit for battle. To which we may add, that the principles of idolatry, which many of the Israelites had themselves embraced, would tend to weaken and dispirit their multitude, as they would tend to animate and encourage the pursuer, it being usual with the idolaters of those days, whilst they counted Jehovah amongst the Gods, they worshipped, not to think much more highly of his power, even where they allowed its superiority, than of the power of the other Gods, their own proper idols. Though they saw with their own eyes the moving cloud, which was at the head of the march, they would not even consider Him, that was clothed with it as more to be feared than the terrific image, before whom and before whose priests they had been accustomed to bow and to tremble in the idolatrous temple.

Under such circumstances then, we may now be allowed to say, how great must have been the faith of Moses and of those who with him were true to the cause of God. With such a multitude in their train, so heartless, so brutish, so ignorant, so faithless, and yet so numerous how great must have been that faith, which could remain unshaken and assured, that he, who was even to them invisible, would still save them out of Pharaoh's hands.

When our insignificant domestic affairs wear a gloomy aspect, how few amongst us are there, who steadfastly believe in God! What then in this case must have been the faith of those, who did indeed believe, when the lives and fortunes of so many thousands were with their own in such imminent hazard.

We have alluded to the apparent mistake of the leader of Israel who conducted their retreat, and certainly if it did not appear so to Moses, who had received an express command from God, which way he was to lead the people, it would appear so to all who knew not that command, especially to the idolaters of the camp, as it certainly, as we read, did appear so to Pharaoh and his court. Nor can we doubt from what we also read, that the camp was generally of the same opinion with Pharaoh and his court, that they did generally consider themselves, as entangled in the land, as shut in by the wilderness. Nor as we also read, was their leader himself entirely free from hesitation and embarrassment, giving even himself this proof to us for our instruction, that not the greatest privileges of a spiritual nature shall be a compleat security against the backsliding of the heart, that not the closest intimacy and converse with God, even as of a friend with a friend, shall clear away all the suspicious mistrust and unbelief of the heart of the most favoured servant of God; finally, that not even miracles of the most decisive and most alarming nature shall be able, we will not say, to convince and convert, for that assuredly they will not do, as we know from history itself, but shall not always be able to controul and silence the objections and

doubts of those, who are truly convinced and truly converted. The people said unto Moses, *Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?* And Moses gave an answer, for which he was, though gently, reproved. *Wherefore criest thou unto me?*

The upbraiding seemed to recall his courage and rekindle his faith. He spake bold words to the people; he bade them with the sea before them and rolling its waves at their feet, go forward. And how great under these circumstances was his faith. In his rod, which he was told to stretch forth over the sea, there certainly could be no power to divide its waters. It could only be by his faith that that division took place. That division could only be by the power of that Angel of God, who commanded him to stretch forth his rod, and who then gave the answer to that sign of his faith, commanding on that sign, now become a signal, the wind to blow, and the waters to obey its force. That division could only be by the power of that Angel, who in this hour of danger, the Egyptians pressing close upon the rear of his army, did what every King ought to do in such an hour, took the post of danger retiring himself from the van to the rear. That division could only be by the power of that Angel, who thus shewed his inclination and purpose to save, who thus realized the hope and expectation of his people that he was indeed their faithful King, that he was that God, who had been the God to Abraham, and the God to Isaac, and the God to Jacob, and was now the God to them who were their seed. Do we not see here the power of faith? Though our faith may be weak, and though the

sign, we give of it, may be nothing worth, may be in itself as unavailing as the rod of Moses stretched forth over the sea was to divide its waves, yet, if we give the sign, it shall bring forth into act the very power of God itself on our behalf. Our faith, would we all had faith, shall bring down from heaven in aid of our case, whatever that may be, however afflicting and however desperate, the power of Almighty God himself. It shall bring down from heaven, from the very throne of God, where is seated the Mediator, who obeyed unto blood, to speak in the language we are now to use under the New Testament, to our bosom the Holy Ghost, the grace bought and promised by Him, who was that ancient redeeming Angel of God, but who is now our Christ.

It has been thought, that the passing through the red sea, being the passage by which a great deliverance was effected, may be considered as a type of our deliverance by the blood of Jesus Christ. And certainly our Jesus was the Angel, who was then enveloped in the guardian cloud. Certainly too, it was the ancient Church, that was delivered from its tyrants in this passage, as the Church of Christ is now delivered from its tyrants by his blood. Certainly too, the deliverance was not imperfect, as ours also is not. Our tyrants lie dead before us. Nor shall the name given to the sea be inapplicable in the parallel. They who think this passage to be such a type, will say, that we are sprinkled, we are washed, we are saved in the red sea of the blood of Jesus and that the blood is as a sea, sufficient to sprinkle and wash, and save all the Church. But then it must be acknowledged, there

is no warrant in the Scripture for such a parallel as this, and that, though the parallel be an innocent meditation, it is but a meditation; it is not to be held, as a doctrine. Let no one find fault with us, if we have such a meditation. The meditation shall do us good; it shall be for our comfort; but then it is not to be maintained as a doctrine.

It has also been thought, that this passage through the red sea was in some sort a type of our Baptism, if not the Baptism itself administered in this miracle by the Angel of the covenant himself, who was in person amongst the people establishing his own authority and subordinate to his own, the authority of Moses. And doubtless, something like a warrant for this notion may be found in the Bible and in the facts of the case. There is this language in the writings of our Apostle, where speaking of the passage through the red sea he says, *they were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.* The facts of the case present themselves to us thus; first, that the people were sprinkled with the surge, or that their descent was as immersion in the water; next, that there was now a clear separation of the people from the Egyptians. While on the soil of Egypt, the separation could not be distinctly made out. Though they were in reality the subjects of another King, and were to be hereafter openly declared to be such, yet on that soil, they were for a time, at least, being under his guardianship, the subjects of Pharaoh, and, when that subjection was at an end, yet remaining in his kingdom, he still had an excuse for preferring his claim. But now they distinctly came under the sway of another; they were now on their passage to another territory

dipped in a laver, which became their baptism unto Moses. That laver cleared them from the subjection they had been under, or was for their purification in emblem at least, from the defilement of it. They ascended out of the sea becoming now on another soil distinctly a separate nation, and now made clean for their new Lord and King, and his vicegerent Lawgiver.

Who of this numerous company descended into the deep and ascended out of it in faith, we are not told. We know, that some had faith; we know, their leader with some of his coadjutors had; but then we are as sure, there were thousands that had not. We are therefore to take the expression in the text, which speaks of all, as if this part of the company were put for the whole, or as if these few were the leaven of the lump. Nor are there wanting other and perhaps, better reasons for the Scripture's adopting in this case its usual popular style, which disregards the exact and rigorous meaning. There is the principle of substitution, on which a nation shall be represented by its King or Leader, on which the faith of the Shepherd shall be taken for the faith of the flock, who go, where in faith he bids them go. Nor is it altogether unsuitable to say, all had faith, if we bear in mind, that the Head of the Church of Israel, which was in strictness, composed of the few, who believed, was one with the King of all the nation, that the power, which was engaged to save the Church was bound by a like bond, by the covenant with Abraham, to save the nation, that the laws for the Church proceeding from her Head were of the code for the nation proceeding from the King, and applicable in some

proper sense of their terms to the civil as well as religious subjection of all, that further, all the people were born to the same covenant, which was or was to be confirmed to them by the same rite, that further also, on this occasion was directed to the Angel of the covenant then in the cloud and in the fire the anxious look of all, which look of all shall be almost taken for the faith of all.

In this discourse we have incidentally let fall some practical remarks. We may now add these; and, first, if it were allowable to put that construction on the passage of the Israelites through the red sea, as if in a hidden meaning it had reference to our deliverance from our enemies by the blood of Christ, we are carefully to consider, in what way we apply that blood to our case. In the case of the children of Israel there was no expiation in the type, neither was it the type of the blood of the obedience or of the merits of Christ; it can only be taken as the type of the blood of sanctification, of the blood, by which grace is bought for the purification of the heart, for the communication of holy virtues, especially, to speak with reference to this case, of courage to go forward, though enemies pursue, in our Christian profession on the intricate, rough, and narrow road, which leads to heaven, and to adopt the mode of escape from them provided in the Gospel, which is by daily prayer, by daily self-denial, and by daily taking up the burden of the cross.

Next; if it be allowable, which perhaps it may be, to take this passage through the sea for a type of our Christian Baptism, or for the Baptism itself, we are in faith, it is clear, to bring ourselves and

our little ones to the baptismal laver. We are at that laver to give up ourselves and them in faith to the Angel of the Covenant, who is our Christ, for us and them to become his flock, his followers and subjects. We are at that laver, at which, when faith is there, the Holy Ghost presides, to separate ourselves and them from the contagion of the world, from the idols, the world worships, the pleasures and lusts of the flesh, and from the bondage of Satan the tyrant and God of this world. *Amen.*

XVIII.

THE FAITH OF JOSHUA AND HIS ARMY.

HEBREWS xi. 30.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

THE fact, which is referred to in the text, has in it the nature of a miracle. It was as much a miracle, as the fact which had occurred just before it, namely, the passage of the children of Israel through the river Jordan. Which was the greater miracle of the two, we need not enquire; perhaps, we cannot enquire, for there can in strictness, be no comparison instituted between this or that miracle. All miracles are proofs of the power of God, and when we speak of those acts of his power, we cannot possibly take any measure of his power in them; we know nothing in those acts of a greater or a less power. To alter the course of nature, which is the thing done in a miracle, and to originally appoint and establish that course, though the latter may seem to us a greater act of power than the former, must be equally easy to him. Neither need we enquire, why it is, that mention is made of this miracle, as being the effect of faith, and not of the other. We are to ac-

quiesce in such instruction, as the Scripture is pleased to give us, whether by miracle or otherwise, and be thankful for it, though we might perhaps here conjecture, and perhaps innocently, that, though both miracles were alike the effect of faith, it was of more moment to record the capture of Jericho, as being by faith, because it was the first exploit of the war, which was to end in the conquest of Canaan, whilst the other miracle, the passage through Jordan, was but the door of entrance into that country, was but the passage into the scene and field of action. We know from the New Testament, that faith can work miracles. It can remove mountains. *If ye have faith,* says our Lord, *and doubt not—if ye shall say to this mountain; Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.** And it is more to our purpose to enquire, how this is, or how, to refer to the instance in the text, faith was the occasion of the falling down of the walls of the city of Jericho.

Besides what we know, as above, from the New Testament concerning faith, we learn also from thence, that it is the principal thing to be regarded in our religious profession that, as to the title to salvation, it is the only thing, excluding all human works, all human endeavours from a share in obtaining or securing that title, that human works and endeavours are at the best, but an evidence of faith, do at the best, but give to the disposition of the heart a meetness for heaven. It is impossible to read the New Testament even in the most superficial manner, without perceiving the importance, that is there given to faith, without perceiving, how all human

* Matthew xxi. 21.

works and endeavours are there degraded, are there almost accounted as nothing, and certainly are entirely so accounted with reference to our justification, to our title, or our merit for heaven. When therefore we read of the capture of this city, there is a manifest similarity between it and the case of our salvation.

The capture was, as our salvation is, without any endeavour on the part of man, that could at all in itself bring it about. The besieging army was commanded to march with the parade of war round the walls; the trumpets were to be blown, and at a fixed time there was to be an universal shout. But then we must be satisfied, there could in these things be nothing, which could avail to the overthrow of the walls. The faith of the besiegers prompted their obedience; it was their faith, which prompted them to march as they were commanded, to blow the trumpets, and to shout. It must be the same, out of regard to which the power of God heaved the walls from their foundations. Their faith took the city.

My Brethren, let me here speak as a Preacher, it is our faith, which inclines us to bend our knees in prayer; Do you pray? It is our faith, which prompts us to obey that command; Do you obey that command? It is our faith, which causes the tear to fall at the remembrance of our sins; Did you ever drop a tear at such a thought? It is our faith, which produces the prostration and the sighs of humility and contrition; Did you ever heave such a sigh? Was there ever at any time such a movement in your breast? But then, what is there in our genuflexions, what in our devotional atti-

tudes, what in the loudness of our cries, what in the tear that falls from the eye, or in the heaving of the bosom? Of what avail can these things be? It must be faith, it must be only that, which goes before or prompts this obedience, these prayers, these tears, and sighs; it must be this faith only, which brings down the power of God to deliver and to conquer for you; it must be this only, which applies the power of God in Christ to your case.

Besides what we thus learn from the New Testament, we further learn from thence, that in the strict evangelical use or definition of the word, faith is reliance upon the Mediator Jesus Christ. In whatever way faith is spoken of in the New Testament, if it does not expressly, it does virtually or implicitly take this form. The description of it is always essentially this. It is reliance on the expiation, and on the righteousness of Christ, which are his mediation. It is reliance on his power thus to save. It is for us then to consider, how faith as to this meaning of it, which is the true, can have place in this story.

We see in the story, that all human endeavours were entirely excluded in this conquest of the city, and we can have no doubt, but that it was the power of God, the special exercise of his power, working by itself contrary to all reasonable expectation, and to all experience of the course of nature, which brought it to pass. Wherefore the object of faith was the power of God, nor can we at all doubt, who this God was. It was that Angel, who, while Joshua stood by Jericho just before or at the time of the siege, appeared to him claiming to himself a peculiar title with reference, if the expression

may be excused, to the campaign which Joshua had just entered upon. It was that Angel, who claimed to himself, even in the presence of the heaven-appointed commander, who was then leading the army of the Lord of hosts, the title of Captain of the host of the Lord. It was that Angel, before whom Joshua on hearing this title, and remarking his drawn sword, fell down on his face to the earth and worshipped, thereby acknowledging, from whom his own title and office of commander were derived or whose sword that was, which was to smite and conquer. It was that Angel, who told his substitute to loose his shoe from off his foot, as now standing on ground trodden by the foot of the Lord God of Sabaoth. It was that Angel, who was the holy Lord God of Sabaoth himself.

Nor in order to make out, who this God was, are we to omit that distinctness, which was given to the object of faith, independent of that personal revelation made by the Angel of his name and character or of the presumption arising out of the miracle itself, by the Angel's telling Joshua beforehand what was to happen, how such and such measures being by him and his army adopted, which had in them nothing of the nature of an assault, *the wall* should *fall down flat*. By this previous information, Joshua and his army learned, for Joshua mentioned the matter immediately after he had heard it to his army, that it was the power of God himself, in which they were to trust for the success of this their first essay in the war they had begun, or for the breaking down of the first barrier, that was opposed to their conquest of the land. By this previous information they were directed to that Angel, whose

power they and their forefathers had long known, and whose cloud, his long-known and visible habitation, rested on the ark they carried with them in their procession round the wall, and having this his cloud and this his special promise before them, and believing they saw the promise fulfilled, they saw, not the act of power, that was a thing not to be seen, but the effect of it. Did we, let me here say, believe the word of God, we should find it to be his power, we should see, not the manner of it, it is only for God to speak and for us to mark his speech, we should see the effect of it, we should see the removal of our spiritual hindrances.

Neither, in order to make out still more distinctly, who this God was, are we to omit, what the Scripture tells us concerning Joshua, concerning his office and name, how in his office generally considered he was the representative and type of Christ, how even his very name is the same as our Jesus. Wherefore he being on this occasion, as is clear from the story, the representative of the Angel, who had revealed himself as the primary or real leader of the army, and he receiving from the Angel, who was in the cloud upon the ark, his instructions concerning the siege and capture of the city, that Angel, who in the form of a man had shewn himself as the Captain of the host of the Lord, must be the same with the Angel in the cloud, and the Angel in the cloud must be the same with our Jesus, which name his representative bore. And if this be so, then the faith of Joshua receiving his instructions from the Angel in the cloud, which faith was confirmed to him by the personal interview he had just had with the same Angel in the warrior form, and the faith

of the army taking those instructions from Joshua was really faith in the power of that Jesus whom we confess and worship. The commander of the army and the Priests and the people that followed, marched to this their first conquest believing in our Christ.

Nor in order to make out still more distinctly, if there be need to do so, who this God was, are we to omit, what the Scripture tells us concerning the land of Canaan, into which the army was now entering, how it was the land of promise, how it was the land flowing with milk and honey, to denote the rest and peaceful enjoyment of that land; how finally, it was the type of heaven itself. When therefore we consider these two types, the one in the leader of the army, and the other in the land, of which by a title given by the Angel in the cloud possession was about to be taken, and when we put them together, as if side by side, there is manifestly a lustre thrown around the primary or real leader; the faith of Joshua and the army was faith in the Angel of the covenant, the same as the Gospel covenant, where the title to heaven is the work and acquisition of that Angel only; it was faith in that Angel, whose power is that title, which we know from the Gospel to be the righteousness of our Jesus, and which power as in that title brings down the power of the Father in the grace of the Holy Ghost to break down the barriers, especially the barrier of death, which is just before the entrance into heaven.

We have not touched on the number of days, or the number of times, which the army on the seventh day were to compass about the walls of the city.

But then, as the number of days is given in the text, perhaps, it will be proper for us to notice it, and perhaps, we may be allowed to say, that possibly in the number, which is seven, reference is had to the sabbath as if the city was taken on the sabbath. And, if this were so, then perhaps, we may draw confirmation to what we have said on the faith of Joshua and the army. We may perhaps say, that a reference is here had to that long day of rest, which is to be in heaven, to, as some are pleased to speak, the everlasting sabbath of heaven, a sentiment which if true, greatly enhances the faith of Joshua and the army, as if after the example of their forefathers in the covenant, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, though with a faith more enlarged in its object than their's, they considered their victorious entrance into Canaan with the Angel in the cloud upon the ark to be the emblem of their future victorious entrance with him into heaven.

In speaking of the faith of Joshua and the army on this occasion we have spoken of them collectively; we have not made any distinction between those amongst them, who were true believers, and those, who were not. It is indeed beyond all doubt, true, that such a distinction ought to be made. We know from the history itself that they all had not the faith, we speak of; we know from the history of the camp itself of the children of Israel, from the caution and warning given them before the capture of the city by their leader and from the event which followed immediately upon the conquest, that there were in the camp many disloyal, faithless followers. But then our warrant for speaking of them collectively is taken from the Scripture itself, which

almost always speaks popularly, and from the view of the camp, what it itself was. It was besides being a camp, a Church; it had the ark of the Angel in the midst of it, and the ark was seen of all with the cloud upon it, and was acknowledged by all, all bowing before it, all, obeying generally the commands, which issued from it.

The same thing, which we find in this ancient Church, we find also amongst ourselves. We come together and meet in one congregation, all apparently of one mind, in our dress and manners pretty much alike, and apparently alike in our intentions. We all bend our knees in prayer; we all bow at the name of Jesus, as if we were all agreed in owning him, and believing in him. We would fain be all considered as making one Church of the faithful; and perhaps there will be times, when even the language of the preacher who ought to be careful in his description will seem to warrant this collective way of speaking of professing christians, as if every professor were a believer. Nor does the Church in the offices of her liturgy, use any other style. But then we must all of us allow, that such popular language, or such charitable way of speaking must have its limits. Even the Church herself gives pretty broad hints, whatever her charity to her members may prompt her to say; she well knows all her members are not true members, that there are evil or careless livers amongst them, that there are those, who have and hide the accursed thing in their houses and in their hearts.

My Brethren, is not this true? If I would speak in charity to you and of you, am I not presently hindered in my charities by your known public

behaviour out of Church? Tell me, professing to own and honour Jesus Christ, do you indeed do so? Tell me, professing to believe in Jesus Christ, do you indeed believe in him? Tell me, hoping to go to heaven at last, where is the foundation of your hope? We commonly hear the language of hope, as to admission into heaven—I can have no wish to discourage your hope, but then tell me, what is the foundation of it? If you answer that your hope is founded in Christ, that reply ought indeed to be satisfactory; but then, to be excused my persevering in asking questions, tell me, is it altogether in Christ or is it in part, in yourselves and in part, in him? If you be partial to yourselves in the case, and think your endeavours are to be allowed to have a share, remember the example of faith before you is against you. There was no endeavour of man in that conquest; the honour of it belonged only to Christ. So, as to your admission into heaven, as to your victory over death and Hell, it is altogether the fruit of the love and power of Christ, the effect altogether of his spotless righteousness. *Amen.*

EIGHT SERMONS.

SIX PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY, AND A SPITAL SERMON BEFORE THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON, AND ONE IN TRINITY COLLEGE CHAPEL.

XIX.

THE RIGHT TO LIFE.

[Preached before the University of Cambridge, November 29th, 1795.]

PART I.

EXODUS XX. 13.

Thou shalt not kill.

The love of life seems to surpass every other instinct of the brute creation, and every other affection of the human breast. It goes not out, but with the last agony and struggle. To die for another, is benevolence, which is not considered, as imitable. To die for one's country, the last service of the true patriot, is, to merit the fairest epitaph of glory. We speak it to the praise of our Redeemer, that His love was stronger than death; and the martyrdom of his followers is their brightest crown.

When indeed we reflect on the causes which awaken and perpetuate this feeling, we are not surprized at its fixedness and strength. An acquiescence in our callings and enjoyments; affinities, and interests, the many links, perceptible and imperceptible, which knit us to the objects and scenes around

us, to our families, to our country; the chill, the ghastliness, and disgrace of death; the mysterious hush of our late stirring, speaking frame; the fear of pain; the consciousness, amongst Christians at least, of a future retribution; the want of innocence, so necessary for him, that is to stand in judgment; all, conspire to rivet the attachment, to give a value to the shell, that holds our being, to make us anxious to lengthen out the flow of time. It was the Heathen's superstition and dread, that darkness enveloped the gates and domains of death. He left with regret, the company of his equals; he mourned, that he should no more see the light of the sun.

Considering then, the strength of this passion, and the principles and sentiments, which fix and cement it, we cease also from wondering at the language, which they shall dictate. The right to life shall be called a sacred right, a right of nature, a right of man. And, supposing this language to be inaccurate, if founded on these principles and sentiments alone, we must still concede something to their commanding influence; we may almost still allow the terms, taking from or correcting their acceptation, out of a regard to men's sympathies and charities, to their weaknesses and prejudices, to the alarm, they feel, at losing so precious a jewel.

Yet, if the mischief arising from the abuse of words be duly weighed, or, if the proneness in man to gratify his feelings at the expence of reason and truth be worth a corrective, our argument will perhaps, be, no useless, or ill-timed lesson.

And, one would think, it were sufficiently obvious, and certainly, is not difficult to be apprehended,

that a breach on the love of life is not the violation of the right to it. The wounding of the feelings is not the hurt, or stab, of the body. They are distinct assaults; distinct impressions. The wanton infliction of pain; the disregard of our fears and cries; the sending us to judgment "with our crimes broad blown;" are the aggravations, are the cruelties, of murder, not murder itself. If the tread of the pursuer of blood be more in fury, if a redder vengeance overtake him, who has robbed a family of its head and protector, a nation of its king, it is the loss of the family and nation, which animates, not arms, the avenger.

Neither is it less obvious, that our knowledge of the preciousness of life is posterior to the right. Our attachment to the light of the day is not coeval with our organs; the sense of danger is not innate; it is acquired. But the right to existence is appropriated to the frame, when it is first fashioned. It is coeval, connate with it. It is the fence of the infant in the womb against assault and destruction.

It appears then from hence, that the idea of murder, or, the violation of the right to life is to be restrained to the extinguishing of the vital principle.

And, upon this conclusion, we may, in course, proceed to ask, whether the principle of vitality, has, in itself, any thing, which gives it a peculiar preeminence, or, invests it with any sacred exemption and immunity. But to this there is no answer: our enquiry is stopped at the outset. We know nothing of this principle, what it is in itself, any more, for instance, than we know of the

principle of vegetation, or even of that, which is our boast and honour, our rational faculty, what they are in themselves. We can, consequently, see nothing in the principle of life, taken in itself, which should give it a claim to our veneration, or, to the title of sacred.

Perhaps too, we shall be more ready to allow, that this principle derives from its own nature no distinguishing prerogative, when we reflect, that the right to life was at first common to all, that were endowed with it, to all the animal kingdom. It was the right of the creeping insect, of the fishes of the sea, of the fowls of the air, of the beasts of the field, as well as of man. It was connate with their being, as well as with ours; it was their protection in the womb, as well as ours. We are destitute of all reasonable argument; we have no plea for our slaughter of animals, but the grant of God.

The institution of sacrifice was, doubtless, early. But the sacrifice was the only slaughter. The then sole use and end of killing, was, the service of religion; the honour of God, and the consolation of fallen man. This too, was the beginning to build, was the laying the foundations of redemption by the Lamb, hereafter to be slain, the Lamb of God. It was the hint and intimation of the slaughter of that Lamb, which also, in the fulness of time, God would ordain to die.

The lordship and dominion of man over creation had not, till the days of Noah, extended to the life of the brute. From thence, and thence only, do we date the privilege of slaying for our convenience, food and sustenance. Then was the grant enlarged;

*Every moving thing shall be meat for you, even as the green herb, have I given you all things.**

Add to this, that the permission to cut the thread of our brethren's life, out of order and course, seems to bear also, against any notion of sanctity in the vital principle. A man may die by the hand of his brother, and the slayer be innocent. We advert not to accidental homicide; that's only like the fever's act; but to the case of self-defence; to capital punishments; to the employ and occupation of a soldier; to those examples of divine vengeance, when the conquerors of Canaan, by an express commission from God, a commission, subsequent to, and superseding, in those instances, the duty to spare, led on their armies to extirpate; when the name and remembrance of nations were put out from under heaven, by a revealed judicial sentence; when a king of that devoted race was, by a prophet, hewn to pieces before the Lord.

Another conclusion then, is, that the right to life is founded on something without, or independent of, ourselves. It is no necessary, essential appendage of our feelings and sympathies. It is not attempered or mixed up in our composition: it is no part of the organization, mechanism, or texture of the body.

The right to life stands solely on the commandment of God. For, what is there without ourselves, that is to hallow the space, we fill, but the law of the author of our substance; what is there, in which our will is not consulted, or concerned, which is independent of us, that is to draw around us a

* Gen. ix. 1, 2, 3. Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy, Vol I. B. II. Ch. XI. p. 94 97. Bp. Sherlock on the use and intent of Prophecy. Disc. IV. p. 91.

circle, beyond which injury and molestation shall not pass, except the will of the almighty artificer of our frame?

Let us not say, human laws and institutions. For, what are these, but the imitation and tally of the divine wisdom; what are these, but the delegation of the divine authority? Holding any other sentiment, we should be unworthy of a place in a heathen community. The old philosophers of Greece would banish us from the schools; her poets, from the festival, and theatre; her statesmen from the senate; her populace from the forum. We might perhaps, find a seat in the assemblies of modern infidels.

The commandment of God alone, is the primary, proper inclosure, the true original mound of our life and being. This, and this only, makes the right to life sacred. Conceding to human law its secondary, imitative authority, its subsidiary vengeance, it is still the commandment of God alone, on which, as on the horns of the altar, the helpless hang, and can then look back on their murderer. It is the inner shrine, at the door of which the assassin halts, lest a fiery judgment break forth to consume. It is this, which is the manacle of melancholy, when menacing suicide, and when deaf to every other dissuasive, or controul; which quashes the silent, lurking purpose of discontent, when misjudging its present, and reckless of its future destiny.

The sacredness of our right to life being thus determined, we now descend to other conclusions, less important indeed, yet perhaps, not uninteresting.

When the right to life is called the right of man,

such language can have two meanings only, meanings, much more harmless, than the tumultuous vehemence, with which the rights of men are pressed on our notice, would at first lead us to suspect. Something more lofty and aspiring, more flattering to our pride and passions, than they are, has doubtless, been intended. The language, in one sense of it, takes man in the abstract, and represents his right, as a right, which is common, or, alike to all; in another, it considers man in his species, and his right becomes nothing more, than a right, reserved to man alone, of all living, moving creatures. The giver took his gift away from the brute, and, under the limitations before adverted to, left it to man. The commandment is suspended with respect to us, when we transgress it, though not for that transgression only.

We mention not the original common right of the brute, nor the suspension of the commandment with respect to us, the limitations of our own right, in order to abash and degrade man's feelings and privileges. Why, we complain, is the meaning of language stretched, till it rend? Why should we make ourselves gods? No one can take the name of *I AM*, but Jehovah.

When the right to life is called a natural right, such language ought to mean no more, than that it is a right *settled* and *fixed*, a right in the settled course and constitution of things, which is the course and constitution of nature, annexed to our being and frame.

A writer of eminence, who has an authorized claim to our attention and study, after intimating, that people were disposed to put upon the word

natural some confused and undetermined senses, observes, that "the only distinct meaning of that word, is, *stated, fixed,* or *settled.*" And, "There seems," he adds afterwards, "scarce any other possible sense to be put upon the word, but that only in which it is here used; similar, stated, or uniform."*

Another writer of eminence, making a "division of rights," remarks concerning *natural,* that they "are such, as would belong to a man, although there subsisted in the world no civil government whatever." And soon after he says; "If a thousand different persons, from a thousand different corners of the world, were cast together on a desert island, they would from the first be every one entitled to these rights."†

Which account, if it could be supposed to define the word *natural,* and to apply it to man, considered, as a single, solitary, unconnected being, following the habits and obeying the temperament, to which his constitution and wants would, in course, would, naturally, lead him, when placed in a desert, or, considered, in other words, *in a state of nature;* this, would be an usage of the word, a sense, in which, I believe, it was never made the epithet of any other substantive, but rights. Natural religion, natural philosophy, natural law, another name for moral philosophy, have never yet been understood to mean the religion and philosophy of man *in a state of nature.* Such a sentiment would merit the contempt of all, who take reason and nature for their guide.

* Butler's Analogy, p. 42, 43. Bishop Halifax's edition.
† Paley's Philosophy. Vol. I. B. II. Ch. X. p. 85.

We do, however, vindicate this writer from the imputation of such an absurdity. His purpose only, is, to separate *natural* rights and contrast them with *adventitious*, that is, with such, as spring out of civil society; to deny of the former, that they are derived from human authority and appointment. And, this being the case, we add his to the other's testimony, to confirm the conclusion, we drew.

The right to life is independent of human ordinances; not derived from our sense of convenience or benefit: it is a right of nature, having no concern, either with a state of nature, or with civil society; in either condition, a right alike to all, in that sense of the expression, a right of man; an uniform, fixed, settled right, appropriate to our frame from its first structure to its natural decay and dissolution, appropriate by the commandment of God only, *Thou shalt not kill.*

Such is the argument, we offer, in order to determine the true idea of murder, and to settle the foundation, on which our right to life stands.

The remarks, which follow, contain an enquiry into the reason of the commandment. When a rule of human conduct is prescribed, the reason of the rule, if it can be discovered, will be a compensation, not unworthy the labour and search.

We ought, indeed, to bear in mind, that investigations, which have for their object the divine counsels, are, at all times, hazardous, and may be presumptuous. Our satisfaction in this our state consists not in understanding the divine legislation, but in obeying the ordinance. This is the pediment of our hope, the basis of our safety, that we put

ourselves, our all, under God's government, *under the shadow of his wings*, in meekness and in faith.

Yet, perhaps, whilst we remember this caution, we shall not conceive unworthily of the *Divine mind*, that it should appear to him fit and congruous, that in the maker should be the sole disposal of the thing made; that the sole, supreme sovereign should exercise sole, supreme dominion throughout the whole realm of being.

Nor, conceiving thus of the sway of God's sceptre, do we forget the investiture of authority, which took place at creation, and the deluge. And, in the subjecting the beasts of the field to another lord; in the allotting to man the heritage of the earth, *the herb bearing seed, the fruit of the tree;* in the adding the animal to the vegetable kingdom; we cannot but admire, the grace of the sovereign of the universe, which could admit a partner of dominion; the condescension of the artificer, which could cede a share in the works of his own contrivance, and part with the power to destroy them. But the boundary of this subordinate authority was here fixed. The life of man was in the hands of his maker and God, only. The sovereign retained this part of his sovereignty, and by our premises, the cessions and surrenders abate not from the part retained.

And it was fit for other reasons, he should retain it. Of the things made, man was too precious for any other to dispose of, but God. His maker, in the commandment, was pleased to have respect to the glory and beauty of his workmanship. We mean not the preeminence of the human form, the gait sublime, the forehead erect to heaven. The natural

head of the creation had received another, nobler impress from above.

At the close of the benediction on Noah, we find the law, and the sanction of retaliation; and in the reason of the one we read the reason of the other. *Surely the blood of your lives will I require: whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.**

The loss of his original holiness had not so befallen man, as to mar all his capacities of virtue; as to exclude his restoration to purity. If a partaker of redemption, if again stamped with the seal of the Holy Ghost, he is again meet for heaven; he is again like unto God; and shall be *the spirit of the just man made perfect.*

The forfeiture of happiness was not the penalty of man's offence, in such a way, as to damp all hope, to bar all forgiveness. If a partaker of redemption, if pardoned, he shall re-enter paradise; he shall be, where there is no more curse; he shall be again, an heir of God, a co-heir with Christ, of everlasting glory.

Well then, may God care for a being of such dignity, of such a price. Well may he sanctify man's time and opportunities, his state and occupation. Well may God prolong his return to dust; make inquisition for such a subject of his kingdom. Well may he treasure in his temple its chief ornament; keep the issues of his life, for whom Christ died.

We have before shewn, that the right to life, considered, as a right, has no concern, either with a state of nature, or with civil society. It is, inde-

* Genesis ix. 5, 6.

pendently of either condition, of any circumstances of man, except the cases of forfeiture formerly mentioned*, a right, alike to all, a right of nature, and of man. But, considered, as the gift of God in the commandment, which, it is to be remembered, founds, and is prior to, the right, it is given on the supposition of a state of society; on the supposition of men's being within the observation and the reach, one of another. It is given, as the bridle and check of the spite and revenge of each man's neighbour; of the avarice, ambition and envy of each man's brother, that the younger may not slay the elder, unconscious of his crime.

Yet this is not all the counsel and care of our divine lawgiver. To provide the curb of outrage, is not His only praise. To Him belongs the praise of all true legislative wisdom, to prescribe a rule of conduct, not for obedience only, but to make the obedient happy; for the alleviation of human miseries; for tranquillizing a disordered scene. He had before His view the long successive series of human generations, inseparably blended together, mixed in inexplicable entanglings. He foresaw the multifarious interests, which would spring out of the invention, the strength, and labour of man, his duty and his curse. He had also, before Him, the task and province of assigning, throughout all ages, to all, who should be born, their different employments, posts, and offices, and, of combining all together in harmony.

And, have not we read and felt, that blood is no cement of society; that after cutting the thread of another's life, it is not easy to fill the void, we have

* See p. 192.

made; that no din deafens, no burial smothers the cry of blood; that one blood spot may become a thousand? We are not ignorant of the benefits, which accrue from assuaging the tumultuous movements of the soul. The calm, after discord between friends, is sweet. The signs of the ranklings of the heart are not unknown to us; the disordered gait, the eyeball's restless glare, the blight of the countenance of murderers, are on ancient and modern records. What city is the seat of terror, but that, in whose streets the assassin can lie hid, in whose banquets there is poison? Upon what inheritance do we write peace and enjoyment; upon what empire tranquillity and glory? Not upon those, whose foundations are laid in blood.

The aggravations of murder, also, become reasons for the commandment. The murder of the priest of God bears a pleading prayer to heaven. He, that smites the magistrate, shall not be pitied, if he be refused the common delays of justice. The spirits of the children of a family are bound up in the spirit of the parent. His life is their wealth. In his death the pillar of the house falls. Ten thousand thousand cords shall be drawn through the hearts of a people to the heart of the King. His security shall feed, strengthen, comfort all. When "his heart bursts" at the feet of the ungrateful conspirator, anguish, like the piercings of the sword, shall fill every bosom; desolations, which cannot be calculated, shall come.

XX.

THE RIGHT TO LIFE.

[Preached before the University of Cambridge, June 26, 1796.]

PART II.

EXODUS XX. 13.

Thou shalt not kill.

In the argument, which shews the divine precept to be the only foundation of the most valuable human right, or in that, which contains the reasons for the precept,* it will hardly be thought a fault, whatever other defects they may have, that they suppose the Legislator to have man for his object, and the enactment to be the inhibition of murder and suicide. Even to have mentioned, that either argument stood on the foot of such preliminaries, so little to be questioned, would have then for that reason, required an excuse; and, perhaps, the same would be wanted for bringing such considerations now into notice, if the opportunity had not come for them to take rank, and to be allowed their turn. If it be their opportunity, from that shall

* See the former Sermon.

things insignificant derive significance. The explanation of a law must propose the common, as well as unfold the hidden and skilful point. Those, whom a law protects, must form a part of its meaning and its commentary.

It has been said, that the Hebrew verb in the text, denoting to kill, is, when used in Scripture, generally applied to those cases, where the life of man is taken away.* Yet it is not pretended, that it is always so applied. And the interpretation, which on this account, makes the precept the protection of man alone, may be thought to sustain a loss, even by one exception. Nor will the exactness or precision of words at any time serve for a sure measure of doctrine. Human speech is impatient of restraint. It is in this sense, as well as in others, winged ; it is prompt to overleap the confine of one signification only.

It has also been said, on the behalf of this restriction of the commandment in its object, that the commandment belongs to the second table of the decalogue, and that that table comprizes the sum of our duty to our neighbour.† But it is probable, the division of the decalogue into two tables, which is alluded to in this assertion, had respect to one or other only, of these ends, either the accommodation of Moses, who was to carry them in his hands down from the top of Sinai to the plain, or, to suit the size of their future repository, the ark. If, however, it were allowed, that, in the invention of the two compartments, regard was had to another end, which is, the division of virtue into the duty to

* Andr. Rivet. Oper. Theolog. Tom. I. p. 1376.

† Calvin. Institut. p. 83. Genev. 1550. A. Rivet. ibid. p. 1229. Secker's Lectures on the Catechism of the Church of England. Lect. xviii.

God, and the duty to our neighbour, still, that such was the aim of the inditer, is an assumption previous to the proof of the contents of the tables, when it ought to be a deduction from it. And therefore this assertion cannot here be deemed an argument.

The true, and perhaps, the only reason, why no living thing, but man, is the object of the law, is this; that its protection had been long wholly withdrawn from the brute creation. At the fall it was withdrawn in part. Animals then began to die in sacrifice. At the deluge was lost all life's privilege. They then began to die also for man's convenience and daily food. From that period man is lord, together with God, of their life and being.

From ascertaining this restriction of the precept, we are naturally led, in the order of our thoughts and subject, to the things, it forbids. And these are murder and suicide; acts, differing from each other in one circumstance only, this being the extinction of life by the life's owner, that, its extinction by another's violence. The transgression and the guilt, in both, are the same; nor, unless we be nice in differences, does the punishment differ, but in this. In the one case it commences on earth; man is joined with God in the pursuit of blood; in the other, it commences from the invisible judgment seat; God's arm is by itself in vengeance.

In the mention of murder and suicide, as the things forbidden, our explanation seems now to terminate. If the language be an interpreter, the law offers nothing more to the reader. It has, however, happened, that a sentiment of another sort, not bounding the law by this construction, is gene-

rally current. Most, if not all, approved commentators have held, that not only murder and suicide are prohibited, but anger having no cause, hatred, revenge, envy, malice, cruelty, and even words of malevolence, reproach, or disdain. Neither is this the whole. The precept is thought to be imperative, as well as prohibitory, to enjoin such acts of kindness, as shall secure from injury, promote the livelihood, safety and welfare of our neighbour.*

On which interpretation we observe, in general, that it does not appear consistent with our notions of legislation, or, of the known benevolence and tried equity of him, who was in the present instance the legislator, that so much meaning, if so much were intended, should be expressed in words not seeming to teach it, that their real should lie so deep below their apparent import. We do indeed with reluctance advance this observation, because it is, or, is like, the argument oft upon the lip of contumacy and rebellion. It measures the divine conduct and appointments by our notions. We mean not so here; for, if this interpretation be the true, let God be true, man a liar.

If it could be shewn, in any subsequent part of the code, which was at this time delivered to Israel, that the commandment was said to take this extensive acceptation, the matter would be without dispute; or, even, if it could be shewn to have been the case in any other after regulation, whilst the same form of administration lasted, there would be less difficulty in admitting it. A legislator is at liberty in a subsequent part of the same code, to

* Calvin. ibid. p. 82. 109. A. Rivet. ibid. p. 1377, &c. Secker, Lect. xxiv.

determine the meaning of a former ordinance. But no proof of this kind has been attempted. Such a comment does not appear in the books of Moses, or, even, in the whole of the Old Testament.

The appeal is to the New Testament only. But it is to be remembered, that this is an appeal to the time of a new or second lawgiver, to a new or second dispensation and code. And, supposing the passages here appealed to to warrant the appeal, the ancient Jew must be liberated from obedience to this precept in that construction of it. It can bind thus; it can be on the frontlet thus, in the new kingdom of righteousness only.

Yet perhaps, on an examination of the passages it may be justly doubted, whether the construction be obligatory on the Christian. His lawgiver's words are these, *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.**

On which we observe, that there are expressions here, leading us to contrast and oppose, not to combine and gather under one, these rules of duty; to contrast the ancient teaching with the instruction of the then teacher of Israel. The intent of the speaker was, to hold up, in a way of disparagement, the less extensive obligation of the Jew, lying in a precept of a narrow slip, of a narrow bound, and to shew, in distinction from it, and, in a way of honour,

* Matt. v. 21, 22.

the more extensive obligations of the Christian, in the broad, full scroll of Christ; to hold up, in some sort, to contempt, the parsimony of the old dispensation, and the niggardliness of its virtue, when compared with the richness of the Christian economy, and the profusion of its righteousness. This intention keeps the rules apart. The latter are new rules, not explanatory, but additional.

To confirm this sentiment, we might mention the similar disparaging comparisons, which follow; in particular, the contrast between the law of retaliation in the Mosaic statutes, and the law of patience under assault in the Christian, between the law of hatred to an enemy, and the law of love.* In which instances we see two *new* statutes superseding and abolishing the old in disgrace, not, as in the instance before us, an addition of commandments, the supplement of a short rule. And it will, perhaps, be deemed no insignificant argument, that to love one another, is represented in the Gospel, as its peculiar precept, is often repeated, is called *a new commandment*.†

The other passage appealed to is in the first epistle of St. John, and seems to be a better support of the opinion, we dispute, than the former. *Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer*.‡ Now it is acknowledged by all discreet interpreters of Scripture, that its language, being popular, is frequently to be understood with abatement and restriction. It must also, we apprehend, be admitted by those who are best skilled in the tendencies of human passions, that hatred, though it always aims a blow

* Matt. v. 38.—44. † John xiii. 34. See the Spital Sermon on *Mutua Love*. ‡ 1 John iii. 15.

at another's happiness, yet not always strikes at the life. And therefore it is probable, that the hatred spoken of by St. John, is not every species of ill will, but the malevolence, which in its direct intention and infallible tendency, seeks and hunts the life.

Under this limit, there can be no doubt, but that hatred bears the stamp of murder. It is the intent, it is the desire to kill. However the Jew might usually measure his guilt by the outward action, he was not ignorant, that the intention to kill, though unaccomplished, was a breach of the precept. Nor has our argument at all barred out the intention. Every name and denomination of vice, which is akin to hatred, such, as anger and spite, envy and revenge, when it drugs its counsel with murder's purpose, takes its whole taint, colour, and smell.

So far we have considered the prohibition of the commandment, and have endeavoured to shew, that it does not, as is maintained in this opinion, go beyond the ideas of murder and suicide. And, if what has been said be true, the other part of the opinion which holds, that the commandment enjoins, as well as forbids, comes of course to nothing. Nor indeed has any appeal been made to Scripture in support of this notion. The argument used appears to be of this sort, that, as in positive precepts the contrary is forbidden, so in negative the contrary is enjoined*. But to forbid the contrary in a positive precept, is to forbid one of its violations. Whilst the injunction of the contrary in a negative precept, is, in strictness, nothing more or less, than the prohibition itself. To forbid, to kill, and to enjoin, not to kill,

* Calvin. p. 82. A. Rivet. p. 1229. Secker, Lect. xviii.

which is the real contrary, are like propositions. In the account indeed of this precept other contraries have been assumed, such, as the saving of life, the securing from injury. But it is evident, these are not the real contraries.

At this point we return from a discussion, in some sort, digressive, to the original boundary, where it was preposed to fix the commandment, and terminate the explanation. Since, however, it is not unlikely, that, by opposition to a sentiment generally prevailing, disgust, or solicitudes better than disgust, will be excited, it may be proper, from deference to those last feelings, to add the following remarks.

It may be thought, that this excluding comment derogates from the moral of the decalogue. But it is to be remembered, that the restriction of the sixth commandment, or, even, of all the ten, derogates nothing from other precepts of Scripture, prohibiting, or enjoining the things shut out from it or from them, but rather allows them their proper room, dignity and action. Nor are these few in number, which enjoin every species of mercy, and forbid every species of violence, which command to save life, to guard from harm, and forbid the thought and word of evil. Nor can they be rules of life of less authority. They are God's rules, though not heard in fire. The two great rules, *on which hang all the law and the prophets**, copied by Moses into a book; the precepts dropping from the Apostle's pen, or from the honeyed lips of Jesus, are as much God's rules, as those written by his own finger. Nor, as standing on the same authority, can they be inadequate

* Deut. vi. 5. Levit. xix. 18. Matt. xxii. 36.—40.

to the purposes, for which the law is given. The comparison of the conduct with them must equally convince the sinner of transgression, and equally prove the believer's obedience. And it is plain, they have equal sanctions. *Whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment: whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment.**

Another reflection also, may possibly occur, that this argument seems to insinuate, that not the decalogue only, but the whole Mosaic dispensation is incomplete in the preceptive part. And we ask, why should that, which, in other respects, is imperfect, be complete in this? The second mediator and lawgiver was of great dignity; he came from heaven, from the bosom, and the throne of God. He had also, as well as Moses, authority to enact, and more than Moses, authority to annul. Himself too, the beauty of holiness, he can well carry the honour of teaching a perfect moral.

It is a point also of some moment, that, fewer the aids to virtue, fewer the rules, narrower and shorter the code: more the aids, more the height, length, depth and breadth of obedience. The ancient Jew walked in darkness, the disciple of Christ walks in light. On the heart of the one, the operation of the Holy Ghost was slow and feeble; on the heart of the other, it is an operation with a sword's edge, quick and piercing, and a mighty operation, as the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

In treating the three first topics of our subject, occasion has been given to mention the exceptions to the commandment, or, its suspension in certain

* Matt. v. 21, 22.

cases. And, if there be any truth in the remark, that the exception imparts vigour or genuineness to a rule, the omission of these cases would be the limner's fault, who omits the shade, which throws distinctness over his picture.

As the subjection of animals to man, even to the surrender of their life, has been fully adverted to, a repetition of that case is unnecessary.

The next is the case of the Canaanite, whom the hand of the conqueror was not to spare.

In which exception we see a resemblance to the former, both being a suspension of the commandment, or a withdrawing of its protection by other commandments. The only difference in the cases, or, at least, the only difference, we are called upon to notice, is, that of the two excepting or suspensive commandments, the one is an universal and perpetual permission to kill, the other, a permission limited to the sword of Israel, in the day of its vengeance and victory.

To the exception of Israel's soldier, who fought in the armies of the living God, we may now add the case of him, who kills, and exposes himself to the extremities of death, under other banners. This indeed, is an exception, not having a proof so nigh, as the two preceding, because on this point there is no express declaration. But the innocence of every other soldier, if not so easily shewn, is still as clear, as that there is no stain on his hand, who hewed down Amalek's king, or on that hand, which smites the lamb that licks it.

The expedience of government being admitted, the division of authority, without which a man would find it irksome to govern even one more than

himself, becomes, like the division of employment in arts' chamber, very much the trial and the specimen of human skill and prudence. It is true, the moral feelings have a concern in this division; but it is chiefly, to soften the rigours of the authority, to exhibit its strength to the violence, it opposes, as having less of what is animal or brutal in it, as being a portion of the strength of that Governor, in whom are united omnipotence and mercy, and, by this appearance, to sooth into subjection and peace. The moral feelings are here, what the noble temper and natural dignity of the lion are to his rule in the forest, to his more valid pretensions to dominion, his might and his roar.

It is then, chiefly, the skill of man, which is put to one of its best tests in making a just division of the authority, which is to govern. He is to parcel out in separate allotments, and in different proportions and combinations the wisdom and the strength of the state: they are to be so parcelled out, as to be effectual checks to the noxious effervescence of human passions, as that every encroachment may have its peculiar curb, and every species of violence its proper terror, and punishment. To some, who are to govern, are to be assigned, little more than their own personal strength, and much counsel. The judge is to carry the white wand only. To others are to be assigned, less of the state's counsel, and more of its force. The staff is not the ensign merely, of authority; it may be used to repress and to strike. To others is to be assigned the state's force alone, none of the counsel. These, are, the muscle and the nerve. These move to another's will. They compose, what we may call, the animal

or brutal force of human government. Their authority, is, the bayonet and the cannon; the cell, the bolt, and the chain.

In this partition of the authority of government, we are now at no loss to discern the class, to which the soldier belongs. Raised to a subordinate magistracy, he is the state's force only; subject to the state's will, not his own. And, whatsoever be the plea for the whole of the authority of government, the same must be the plea of a part. The privilege of the whole, or, of any part, must be the privilege of each. If there be any magistrate in a state God's minister, a title once given from God * to the bloody, usurping, patroling fasces of the Roman republic; to governors, dividing and controuling, among themselves and a merciless emperor, all the animal strength of man, considered as a barbarian; to men, whose eye on the tribunal of justice was the eye of the tiger in ambush; if there be any magistrate in a state God's minister, so must the soldier be. If the judge using the state's will and wisdom in his decisions, bear from God his licence to condemn, so the licence to kill in battle is from God. If the soldier point the cannon at a seditious multitude, or, at the ranks of a foreign foe, he points it in the name of God.

Hence it appears, that the soldier has nothing to do with the rapacity, injustice, or ambition, which prompt the will of the state. He is excluded from that counsel and will; he has no such intent. The state is the mover, he the engine. He may be, in himself, a man of mercy. He may be a generous soldier; he may weep over the city sacked; he

* Rom. xiii.

may console the wounded prisoner, and dry up the tears of his comrade's widow and children. But, as the goaler can pity and console only, cannot liberate, so the soldier, if ordered to destroy, can pity only, cannot spare. As to shut up in reserve, even a martyr of Christ's, is no blame to the keeper of the dungeon, so there is no stain on the soldier in spilling the blood of the innocent. The fault, if any, lies elsewhere, on that part of the government, which is the will and intention.

In admitting the expedience of government, we admit the reasons for it, and the conditions, on which its authority is assumed. If one of its main reasons be the opposing of strength, in its appointment and contrivance made lawful, to other strength, which passions, disregarding the arm of the invisible governor, bring into action, he, that puts on the robe of rule, is exposed to risk and danger. His robe is liable to be torn and rent, or, to be thrust through with the dagger. To hear loud clamour, to shrink at the secret threat, to sustain assault, or, to die in the seat of power, are the conditions of authority. The very painter has told us this by his emblems, by the growling monsters chained beneath the throne, by the snakes hissing from under the footstool. These are conditions annexed to authority by the same appointment, which gives it. Himself in the place of God, God's assisting partner in the controul of forbidden strength, the magistrate puts his person between God and the people. If there be a frenzy breaking through, he dies in lieu of God.

When the King waves his sceptre to put in motion all the strength and wisdom of the state, it is

the signal also, for folly and discord to speak, for calumny to shoot its arrow, for sedition to lay hold of the hilt of its dagger. Nor always can the fair beauty of justice, or her frown, awe down the noise and the strife. The madness of the people has often done them wrong. The white wand, which cannot hurt, has been broken. If we go to the keeper of the prison, we find his hours, hours of anxiety and watchfulness. He stands between his neighbour and the plunderer, between the judge and the man of violence. And the bolt and the chain are not always sufficient.

The soldier is exposed to still greater risk. The violence, of which he is the check, is more menacing and more formidable. He stands between the King, and his enemies. But his greater risk, like the lesser risk of the others, is the risk of duty. As it is the main article and condition of the authority, with which he is invested, that he carry his life in his hand, and deposit it in the field at the will of the state, so his open, dauntless breast, so his boldness in marching up to the cannon's mouth, are, a courage and magnanimity, which God approves, so his scars are honoured of God as well as of man.

If the soldier fall in accomplishing ambition's vow, or in promoting the triumphs of rapine, so far as he is concerned, he is as the engine perishing in the use, he is as the lance snapping in the hands of the thrower. The fault of his death is not his own; it is not the fault of suicide. That fault, the waste of his blood, the waste of the state's strength, is the fault of the mind of the state.

The case of self defence, which is the fourth

exception to the commandment, we define to be, where the intention of the assailant to kill is clear and evident, and where the attack is such, as to leave no means of preservation but in his death. Now, if the state has, in these circumstances, granted the power to kill, the slayer is armed with God's and the state's vengeance, and is guiltless. Yet, if the legislature has omitted this provision, he is still armed with God's. The right to life is forfeited. The slaughter is judicial. *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.**

If however, it should be doubted, as it has been, whether it were not better, in these circumstances, to lose than to take life, there is still a law of compassion, which may save from condemnation. It is a law provided for those extremities, where the pique of the feelings is unable to brook the restraint of duty. Even oppression is said to madden the wise,† and it is only the extenuation of any loud menacing cry for privileges, or liberty. But the pinching risk of life may shew the acquittal, once granted to the transgression of hunger's call: *I will have mercy and not sacrifice.*‡

Yet here let there be no misapprehension. The duellist is a murderer. He is more. His offence against the commandment is its double breach. His guilt is the guilt of murder and suicide.

The avenger, neither of the state's, nor God's wrong, he takes up the weapon of death, a weapon, formed for no other than the purposes of death; after many a wish, perhaps, that there had been no quarrel, no affront, or law of honour; after many a pang, perhaps, at leaving the connexions, and ob-

* Gen. ix. 6. † Ecclesiastes vii. 7. ‡ Matt. xii. 7.

jects dear to him; perhaps too, after many a heaving of his breast at the prospect of a future retribution. Under these circumstances, he turns away from the weapon in his hand, and would lay it aside, were it not for a counter inclination, weighing down the scale, which contains his wishes, pangs, and fears. The preponderance is in favour of the demands of fashion, and of the scorns and frowns of men. Under these circumstances, he makes another choice; it becomes his final determination to hold the weapon fast, and brave the issue.

It is scarce necessary to add, that, in this determination, the crime is clear. It is the will prompting the deed; it is the purpose of the double crime.

The case of capital punishments, which is the last exception to the commandment, will perhaps, be thought, not to want so much a plea for its toleration, as a plea, which shall justify. It will be allowed, that there are aggression and enormity, by which the perpetrator becomes so unsightly, as that his name ought no more to be heard amongst the living; that there are instances of a propensity to evil in the human mind, as ferocious, and as ungovernable, as the hunger of the beast of prey, or, the spite of the trodden viper; and that the destruction of the man, is, as that of the animal, unworthy of pity. Whilst at the same time, if these instances be not crimes of blood, the penalty will be thought, a matter to be connived at, rather than vindicated. Referring to the divine institute at the deluge, it will seem, that death is the last, and only vengeance for murder.

The advocate for the introduction of capital punishments in other offences, besides murder, will

not give much weight to the example of the Jewish commonwealth. It may be said, that example is no rule, and that, as the statutes and sanctions of that government were dictated by God himself, it will be necessary for other states to shew a like interposition for like regulations. And the force of these observations must be allowed, excepting, in the latter, so much of it, as intends a denial of the divine interference, altogether, to justify the practice of other nations. Their plea is the divine interference, though not direct and immediate.

Government is power. Being an ordinance of God, it is a moral power. It is moral, in itself, as standing on the same authority with every other commandment. It is also a power for moral purposes. It is to assist and enforce all other ordinances, both its own, and those, which are peculiarly, God's. It is the guardian, overshadowing ordinance of all these other ordinances. It is like the overshadowing canopy of the heavens. It is a power, like the power of God, decked and ornamented with rewards, fenced and aggrandized with terror and punishments. It is a part of the power of God. If ever there should appear on earth a power, taking any other basis, than God's commandment, and professing to recede from this union and partnership with his power, in proportion as it does this, it knits itself to the powers of Hell. If ever there should appear on earth a power, entirely disclaiming this union, it becomes entirely satanic. The abettor of this power is in the crowd, that comes with Christ's adversary.

But not to break our argument from its conclusions, by an intruding, painful reflection on the

use, to which the sword, the stave, and the spear, may again be put, we see hence, that there may be in a state, offences of a deeper die, than murder itself. There may be offences, the blackness of which chiefly consists in being offences against this tremendous, awful ordinance, *a running on the thick bosses of God's buckler.** And this is worse than murder.

We hence also see, why, independently of the command to Noah, murder is capital. The power of every state lies much in the life of the subject.

Neither let it be presumption to draw from hence a plea for the capital punishments, even of theocracy itself. In the theocracy the ruler was himself in some sort, present; his benedictions were audible, his curses visible; his wonders, the wonders of the Almighty, were seen, known, and felt. But sorcery was a direct usurpation of these, his presence, prerogatives, and power. And, as the Jewish government, considered apart from the awe, which the cloud on the tabernacle inspired, and the mandates, which issued from it, was weak and feeble, the authority of a governor was delegated to the parents of every tent throughout the camp. To curse a parent was revolt. Nor is the reason obscure, why adultery was death. A mother in Israel, was not only a nurse, but a governess, to the state. The offence was mutiny.

Neither let it be obtrusion to call into notice, how the penalty of death drops off from some crimes, when under different circumstances, how others rise to a malignity deserving it, and how new, or unheard of crimes are born bringing it along with

* Job xv. 26.

them. In all states indeed, rebellion is, as was sorcery in Israel, and the insurgent's doom the same, and equally just. Yet even here, there is a difference. In those states, which are free, or, where the power is much divided, the crime is less easy to be proved, or less capable of taking a terrific shape, than in those, which are despotic. And consequently in the former, the rebel's punishment is less frequent, than in the latter. Whilst on the other hand, there is with us, a crime followed by death, which a despot shall not know, or shall despise. The Turk, if he knows of forgery, must despise it. Yet rebellion in his domains has not cut the sinews of his power more, than forgery cuts England's. Murder itself is scarce more heinous. And even on the malignancy of that death-stricken crime shall the population of a country have an influence. With the population shall fluctuate the value of the life of a subject. We might suppose examples, where the climate or the soil gives occasion to a law of death. The monopolist usurper of a well of water, would, in Arabia, be her worst robber. The wandering tribes would for once, well combine to redeem it by his blood. In the divine government, at this period, dishonour to parents, adultery, and witchcraft are sunk into the class of those crimes, which provoke the indignation, not the jealousy, of the Omnipotent. The pretender to dreams, and the false prophet have now, little more than the shame and the portion of liars. There is now, in God's kingdom, only one unpardonable death sin. And even the death of that sin is not visibly inflicted on the offender, though it does, what no other does. It shakes the kingdom

in the very foundation of its power. It allows it no subjects.

Upon these considerations it is now not difficult to ascertain the limit to capital punishments. Whatsoever force or contrivance, adapting itself to the circumstances of a state, either covertly undermines, or openly outrages that, in which its strength and power mainly consist, of this sufficiently proved, the proper doom is death. In all instances, to which this description applies, the commandment, *Thou shalt not kill,* is suspended; the offender dies by an ordinance superseding it.

It is the glory of God, as it is the glory of the King, to pass by a transgression. But then the transgressions, they pass by, are transgressions on their justice or on their mercy, not those on their power. They shall, neither of them, hear the murmur at the award of justice, nor the blasphemy on their mercy. They shall, each of them, even forgive every insult on his Son and Heir. It is seemly for justice to bear, with unruffled tranquillity, the sound of the teeth gnashed. It is seemly for mercy to offer her embrace, even when unsolicited, or despised. But it is not seemly for power to do so. Indeed, strength cannot forgive opposing and confronting strength. If it could have such a feeling, to forgive, is, to yield: it is the assailant's victory. The lion never ceases from the conflict, till his adversary lie for dead. No more will the lion of the tribe of Judah, the bruiser of the serpent, Jesus Christ. Satan has struggled; has carried off a spoil; has left a scar on the beauty and strength of heaven's monarchy. And he shall never be redeemed to God. The "Thrones and Dominations"

of light shall never come to a compromise with the Powers of darkness. So the King shall never forgive a rival aggression on the state's strength, in whatever shape it may appear, whether in open array or in ambuscade, whether in forgery or treason, in rebellion or murder.

XXI.

THE ORIGIN AND ENDS OF GOVERNMENT.

[Preached before the University of Cambridge, on Thursday, January 30, 1800, being the Anniversary of the Martyrdom of King Charles I., and dedicated to the Rev. William Lort Mansel, D.D. Master of Trinity College, and Vice Chancellor of the University.]

Εἰ μοι ξυνείη φέροντι μοῖρα τὰν
Εὔσεπτον ἁγνείαν λόγων
Ἔργων τε πάντων, ὧν νόμοι πρόκεινται
Ὑψίποδες ἐρανίαν δι' αἰθέρα
Τεκνωθέντες· ὧν ὄλυμπος
Πατὴρ μόνος· οὐδέ νιν θνατὰ
Φύσις ἀνέρων ἔτικτεν, οὐδὲ
Μήν ποτε λάθα κατακοιμάσει·
Μέγας ἐν τύτοις θεὸς,
Οὐδὲ γηράσκει. SOPH. OED. TYR. 873.

ROMANS xiii. 1.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

IF an apology were necessary, on such a day as this, for taking up any of the topics, which the nature, the origin, the means, or ends of government

might suggest, we are not without such examples, as may be a safe rule and plea for imitation. The wisest and most considerate men have, in all ages, devoted a large portion of their time and labour, even of consecrated time and holy labour, to political investigation. And what wonder they so acted, when governors had given them, from the most ancient and revered authorities, the title of Gods? They did well to look into the meaning of such language. With that sound in their ears, they could not but think, that to understand the construction of a state, was the perfection of wisdom, and to govern with success and blessing, a sign of the most exalted magnanimity.

Our apology, however, need not stay itself here. It can shew a bolder, better pattern to copy after; it can shew the example of the Apostle of the Gentiles.

The Apostle, after stating in this epistle, agreeably to his usual manner, the doctrines of the Gospel, then adds, as he is also wont, a brief catalogue of Christian duties. He first, with expence and effort, builds the pillar of the temple, which is the doctrine, and then crowns it with the ornaments, which are holy sentiments and holy deeds. Let us look on the pillar of the Roman church, and we see there, in broad space, and full to view, the duty and the argument of the text. That we are to *love our neighbour as ourselves*, is indeed, on that pillar sculptured largely and deeply,* but the lines spread wider, and are deepened more,† even on the capital, which say, *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers*

* Rom. xiii. 8.—10. † Rom. xiii. 1.—7.

that be are ordained of God, which inculcate, that a reverent, dutiful subjection to Nero was the prime Christian grace of the Roman citizen.

Upon this apology, though indeed, in the force of these examples it seems to lose its nature, and becomes authority and warrant, we proceed to the topic, we propose; a topic, which, we trust, is not unsuitable to the present solemnity, nor likely to be a lesson, disappointing the pains to learn.

In considering the construction of a state, the first and main thing, which would, probably, engage our attention, is its power or strength. We should hardly fail in viewing a machine, of taking this point into our early thoughts. But the whole of the strength of a state lies in the personal, corporeal, muscular, animal strength of all its members, and in the application of that strength to the powers, which are found in nature, directed by foresight and skill. What the powers in nature are, which the arm or finger of man can give impulse to, and his skill employ for controul, for assault, for resistance, need not now be mentioned. They are not far from every one's reflections.

After this consideration, the next, which may be supposed to interest us, is, the division of this strength into two portions. It is divided between the two classes or denominations, which compose the state, between the governors and the governed. There is no difficulty in apprehending this division. It is plain, that with the governors is, one part, and with the governed, another. In what proportion the division is made, as it is, perhaps, at all times impossible accurately to estimate, so it is not now an object worth enquiry. The proportion will

depend on the circumstances of each individual state, always varying, and in change. The governors must be, either really, or in opinion, both their own, and the people's, stronger than the governed. Perhaps all, that calls for remark, as further worthy of notice, is, that of each species of strength in this division, the governors' portion has less of what is animal in it, and more of what is derived from the powers in nature, whilst on the other hand, the strength of the people has more of the former, and less of the latter.

Now it may be assumed, as an undeniable fact, that, from the foundation of the world, in all climes, where states and empires have arisen, this portion of strength, which their governors possessed, has been held to be a consecrated, or sacred portion, or, in other words, to be a portion severed from the subject's, the other strength of the state, by the very act and interference of God. It was the personal act of God revealing his own will, from which the mass of each community's strength took this general division, and one denomination of it was every where set up in dominion over the other. And this act or commandment was power's consecration, ever so reputed.

Notwithstanding the imperfections, and blots of ancient records, yet manifold traces are still left of the truth of this assumption: notwithstanding the gross superstitions, which have prevailed, yet it has not been entirely lost and buried in their long and dark night. The accounts, which remain in Greek and Roman story, of the first building of cities, and of the first acts of legislation, are not so mixed with fable, but that it may be discerned. What other

doctrine, indeed, do we learn, when we hear of kings inheriting their sceptres from Jove; of the consecration of magistracy by the augur, the assessor and counsellor of Jove; of auspices for war and battle; of lawgivers holding converse with Deities; of the Gods enshrined in the Capitol and Acropolis, never to leave, till the state, they had built, should fall; of the worship, grateful to the gods, taught in the laws of the state; of rebellion, as the Titans' sin? Shall we say, that this is all falsehood, or all the craft of priests?

A specimen of a government, which is near to each of us, and which was certainly the first form of a commonweal, if not the pattern for the rest, the government of a family, may contribute to vindicate our assumption still more. In this instance, if it be true, as doubtless it is, that the obedience of the child hangs on the express precept only, which enjoins it, we distinctly see a consecrated power. One part of the strength of the house, which is the parent's, and which is chiefly, though not entirely, personal, is, by God's ordinance, divided from the other strength of the house, which is the child's, and is by that ordinance, seated in the chair of dignity and rule. The parent's strength thus sanctified, how pleasant is the call of morn to go forth to labour; how eager is his embrace to screen from injury, or soothe to peace; how awful are his arm and frown to chastise transgression, or enforce instruction.

To give additional weight to our position, it is, in a high degree, worthy of notice, that no empire has ever appeared on earth, till of late, the governing strength of which has avowedly taken side with vice;

no usurper, but one, has ever yet displaced and dethroned the common, primary principles of law and justice. In the conflict of might with might, in the battle of rival strength, in the heat and tumult, there have been much wrong, much robbery and blood; but the usurper has always hitherto aimed to insert his strength, with care and nicety, in the place of that, he has thrust out; he has always aimed to fit his limbs to the vacant imperial robe. He has always, till our day, visited the temple of his predecessor, or, had his priest to anoint him with the oil, before he has begun to deal out mercy and judgment; he has always felt a solicitude to sanctify his title and to promulgate his acts in a worthier and more exalted name than his own; he has always chosen, sometimes in compunction, often in hypocrisy, and often, with more excusable ignorance of his own intent, *to be the minister of God.*

The revolutionary governors of France are the only governors, which have attempted to govern in their own name alone, which have thrown out to scorn and contempt, the common, elementary duties, which have hugged unnumbered, cold-blooded murderers in their bosom, which have legalized the most wanton and unnecessary spoliation, which have set up precepts of their own in opposition to, and in repeal of, divine precepts, and, with like hostility, have abridged the meaning of others. In one solitary instance, they have seemed to feel a sort of repentance, though indeed, it was no repentance. Without intending any such thing, as aid to a command in the decalogue, they have at times, seemed to allow, that it was the duty of a government to guard the right to property.

On the whole view of their case, they have put forth their strength, have led forth their armies, have dug into the secrets of nature, and extracted her every power, in order to set up evil antagonist to good. We believe, that there is a throne of might, at war with heaven, seducing its subjects, and delighting in the desolation of man. Whether they believed this, or not, yet they have, in fact, lent their bodies, their every nerve, their every muscle, in support of this power. An event for history, never as yet recorded; a crime of man's, now only in crime's register.

Our assumption may now be placed on a more commanding eminence. It was before represented, as founded in a notion, received in the most early ages, and almost universally, and the proof was said to lie in the annals and practice of nations.—Now we certainly know, that there were revelations of the divine will, which are not contained in the Scriptures. Concerning the words, spoken from heaven, there can be no doubt, and there is as little just reason to doubt concerning moral sentiments, and moral appointments. It is clear, that the delivery of the law from Sinai was not the first promulgation of the greater and more important part of that law; yet the record of the revelations, which preceded that more awful act of God, leaves much to inference, and other history. Let us, in one instance only, look into the Ante-mosaic œconomy, and around upon the heathen world, and the inference is quite sure, though the words cannot be found, that the sacrificial institute, the expiatory and eucharistic oblation, with all their moral sentiments

in their train, were taught immediately from God *.

If then there be a moral sentiment, like this assumption, generally prevalent throughout all ages, we may be allowed to ask, why may not such a phænomenon be ascribed to the actual, personal interference of God. It is probable, the appointment of Nimrod to empire was express. It is also probable, that the usage of the Jewish kings, on their accession, was agreeable to the practice of other monarchs. But, if these examples be thought no support to our assumption, we have another witness, the witness of the Apostle, *The powers that be are ordained of God;* evidently referring to an acknowledged truth, not justifying any one form of government, but justifying its sway, whatever be the form, by an original express designation of God, trans-

* Socrates, apparently, qnotes a form of words, in which, through the medium of the legislature, every state had received from heaven the sacrificial institute. Ὁρᾷς, ὁτί ὁ ἐν Δελφοῖς θεὸς, ὅταν τις αὐτὸν ἐπερωτᾷ, πῶς ἄν τοῖς θεοῖς χαρίζοιτο, ἀποκρίνεται, νόμῳ πόλεως. Νόμος δὲ δήπου ΠΑΝΤΑΧΟΥ ἐστι, Κατὰ δύναμιν ἱεροῖς θεοὺς ἀρέσκεσθαι. Πῶς οὖν ἄν τις κάλλιον καὶ εὐσεβέστερον τιμῴη θεοὺς, ἢ, ὡς αὐτοὶ κελεύουσιν, ὅτω ποιῶν; Xenoph. Memorab. L. IV. C. III. s. 16. Simpson. ed. compared with L. I. C. III s. 1—3. But it is not probable, that an universal law among the heathen originated in the Mosaic ritual alone. The most likely source is, distinct, and often repeated revelations, made to other Patriarchs, other Priests, Kings, and Founders of tribes, besides those in the Hebrew, or Abrahamic line. Let not the reader startle at this note, let him call to mind, in what was the chief superiority of the Jew over the Gentile. It consisted in this, that the religious system, he believed, or was entrusted with, was, all of it, from the oracles of truth, none from the oracles of imposture, or error. Rom. iii. 1, 2. The Gentile was not so happy: he was not as yet the olive of the fenced garden; he was still in the mountain or the desert, visited, indeed, with the dew of heaven, but smitten, even to withering, with blights from hell. He had the altar of the Unknown, Invisible, but the idol's altar was also high raised, not next, but above it; the voice of Wisdom he sometimes heard, but it often could not be distinguished amidst the pomp and riot of false worship, and the loud strife of false philosophy.

mitted down through every line, and ramified through every dynasty, whether of Kings, of Priests, of Satraps, Archons, or Consuls, and now, as a diadem, encircling Nero's head. This power, he says, is for the encouragement and protection of virtue, for the terror and correction of vice, and we are to be subject to it, not only for its utility, for its wrath, or for its reward, but also *for conscience*, that is, for God's own wrath, and own reward, with our holiest love and holiest fear, for this highest sanction's sake, a sanction, which it could only have, as a moral appointment, as an institute revealed from heaven.

If the case of the usurper seem to throw a difficulty before the march of our argument, it may be said, in reply, that it is not necessary for our satisfaction, to clear away every anomaly in this disordered world. We know of a certainty, that the conflict of the rebel's strength with the reigning power is intended as the scourge of guilt, either in the people, or the Sovereign. And it is probable, that, as God's compassion will forgive, under certain circumstances, the breach of the strictest command, so here, in the accomplishment of his vengeance, his wrath will tolerate the foulest sin. It is probable too, that after the execution of his vengeance, the yearnings of his bowels may return, as they surely do, and, in pity to the desolate, weeping multitude, not in favour to the rebel, he may take the usurper under his wings, and use him for the healing of the wounds of the nation; it is probable, that in pity to the sheep, torn, rent, and scattered, not in honour of successful rebellion, he may give security to the spoiler, robber shepherd, and sanctify the occupancy of the vacant seat. The utility shall be

as the plea of extreme necessity*; it shall warrant the exception of an usurping power.

Add to this, that utility often, almost enacts†. It may, in this case, bring out of the place of records the law of consecration. In strictness, utility is the advocate, authority the parent of all law. But the advocate often suggests to the authority the wants of the subject; it often recommends; sometimes, steps into the chair and gives the answer to the people. Particularly, when it bears behind it the importunate cry of misery, and presents a weeping family, it then comes with the suffrage, first given, of wishes, tears, and sighs, and the authority yields to the intrusion, adopts and enacts the law of the public feeling. Is not this the violence, which taketh heaven, and, accomplishing the painter's vision, draweth down the hand to place on the crown?

To this likewise add, that, if it be the wisdom and the mercy of a government, to guard, under certain circumstances, a defective title to property, even against the rightful owner, shall the Supreme be less wise and merciful, than man? Shall man take a divine command, *Thou shalt not steal*, and write it over property acquired by wrong, and shall God not have the like privilege to write this, his wide embracing, far stretching ordinance, over a rebel's throne? To prevent the ashes of the dead from being dug up, shall not he too, suffer the hoar of time to cover and incrust an usurper's title?

Assuming then, this fact, we may now turn our

* Causa necessitatis et utilitatis æquiparantur in jure. Quoted by Hooker, Eccl. Polity, B. v. s. 9.

† In ancient moral philosophy the sentiment is—Utilitas, justi *prope* mater et æqui. Hor. I. S. 3. 98.

attention to a less difficult, and perhaps, more interesting discussion. The ends of the strength of government, considered on this foundation, become a Christian theme, with a moral for kings and nations.

Our apprehension and judgment may perhaps, be here assisted, and the subject before us entitled to more respect, if we call to mind, that the divisions of strength, which have been spoken of, both in the public and in the domestic commonweal, are not the only examples in the world's system, of a like divine arrangement. It has also pleased the Almighty to select man, out of the animal creation, for sway and supremacy in that kingdom. He has made man, his activity and strength, Lord of the life and strength of all other living, moving creatures. He has done it by an express, revealed ordinance.

The ends, for which it is done, need scarce be mentioned. It is done for man's food; but it is not for this alone; it is done as much for his convenience and security. It is ordained to awe into the forest the lion and the tiger, to keep the wolf in his den by day, to make night the only opportunity of his lawless strength. It is ordained to train the elephant and the horse to battle; to bring the dromedary and the ass from the mountains to useful labour. It is ordained to remove out of life and being the strength, which might otherwise dispute the sovereignty with its Lord; to crush the viper and the caterpillar; to lead the sheep to the fold to be sheared, and to destroy the bee for his honey.

Nor are these the only ends. It is a provision for the weak against the strong; it is for the exercise of humanity to the beast of burthen. It is

this, which gives the staff to the herdsman, and the dog and the crook to the shepherd.

Of like bearings and intents with these, is the government of man over his fellows. It is a provision, that men, worse than wild beasts, may not venture out by day; that their menaces, worse than the howl of the wood, may not make afraid; that, if they break loose in the hour, when nature's and man's powers sleep for renewal and refreshment, they may shudder in the seizure of the spoil, and fly to caverns to hide them. It is a strength, touching and pressing the strength of all within its reach, within its proper domain, that that strength may be employed in peaceful, useful occupation; goading idleness to its burthen, and taming the wild and bounding spirit of all, to the curse, which God has denounced, to nurture, to cultivation, to the sweat of the brow. It is a provision for or against all human conduct whatsoever, for or against all human actions and words, which are, indeed, themselves actions, being the efforts of organic strength, for deeds and words of justice, mercy, truth, for individual lawful gratification, for domestic peace, for every virtue in virtue's code; but against deeds and words of violence, injustice, falsehood, against riot, against drunkenness, against breaking of the sabbath, on which day the strength of all is commanded to rest, against every vice in vice's many volumes. It is a provision for the immeasurable distance, at which God seems to be from every one of us, for his absence, if we may so say, which is too apt to tempt to sin.—But we need not here stretch our line further. It is not necessary to speak of the personal advantages derived

from hence to the governor himself, to his courage, to his equity, to his humility, or of the reward of the innocent dutiful subject, in protection, and in the rearing and crowning of his hopes.

We see, in this account, what is better worth our looking at, and considering; we see a certain quantity of man's and nature's power connecting itself, and interfering with, men's passions, the best and the worst, with their hopes, fears, and loves, with their hatred, revenge, and lusts, quelling the one, and awakening and directing the other: we see it connecting itself, and interfering with, the secret springs and principles of human conduct, with all moral motives, and all moral appointments; we see it placed on the watch not only at the door of the cottage, or at the gate of the arsenal, but by the side of the fountains of learning; giving a bias to all instruction; without violence indeed, but with a steady hand pressing the pupil into right doctrine; tolerating the speculations of folly, but not the frenzy; bearing with the conceits of heresy, but not the infection; leaving to the judgment to come the thought of blasphemy, but not the word; we see it listening in arms, to all public speech, the senator's, the pleader's, the preacher's; waving the sword over the scroll hung up in the hall of judgment; with the golden sceptre or silver mace pointing to the scripture sentence on the walls of the temple, to the child's catechism, to the prayer, which alone goes up to heaven, to the blood-sprinkled prayer, to the homily prepared for ignorance, to the standing article of fruitful penitence, of faith, of love, of good works, all, the matter for righteous discourse.

Let us pause here, and say, how ought we to be affected with God's compassion and care, that he should have thus sanctified the very muscles and fibres of man, that he should have thus called out of sleep into life and action nature's worst and basest energies, in support of all justice mercy, truth, and every holy sentiment, and, against all mistake, all folly, and every unholy purpose, whether devised on earth or in hell. How ought we to admire and praise, that such a force should, of all sublunary things, by a law of the most High, by a law written first, at the head of all laws, coupled to every other law, the assisting herald and promulgator of every other law, that such a force should be the natural, settled *, true, proper ally of the church of Jesus Christ, not of a church, pretending to be his, but of that, whose foundations are built on the rock, which alone can sustain the edifice, and whose topstone is, salvation. How ought we of the church of England to be moved with this contemplation, that our State, our King, is its natural, true ally, divinely appointed, by a primæval, sceptred ordinance, the first in nature's, if not in time's, empire.

Whilst we are thus engaged to contemplation, let us take up another conclusion from our subject. Let us draw near to view the monster sin, the sin of rebellion. Let us not shrink from the sight. Through the blessing of God, she is, at this time, struck down, she has received a wound, and her strength is faint. Her deformity, her crime, what is it? It does not consist in the sacking of cities, in the desolation of provinces, in widows' and orphans' tears.

* Bp. Butler's Analogy, p. 43. Bp. Halifax's ed.

This is the "circumstance," the funereal train of all battle. But it lies in the attempt to beat down the out-stretched arm of God. It is a running upon the shield, which covers all honour, all worth, all peace, all science, all virtue. The crime is not in putting to fear the priests of religion and law, in scattering them over the face of the earth, or in dragging them out to death. In other tumult they may be cast forth or die. But it is the cutting off God's Vicegerent, their guardian; it is the separating them, that he and they may never again embrace in their ancient sanctuary.

By this language we mean a warning to those, who are to obey; in the words, with which we close, we mean a warning to the authorities, which govern. And, if they have the lion's heart, as well as his strength, they will not disdain the admonition.

Whose their strength is, and for what ends it is given, is abundantly clear. But, if ever that strength recede from its ends, then the judgment, asleep, begins to stir in its slumbers. God indeed, is oft provoked, yet is long patient and still. But if ever that strength recede from its ends, so that the demands upon God's compassion are exceeded by the demands of his own prerogative, so that the lives and happiness of millions kick the beam against the scale of his right and dominion, then the judgment, awake, begins to step forth to its strange work. Yet even now there may be mercy's intercessions and hindrances. But, if ever that strength disclaim all connexion with his strength, and his commandment, as its basis, then does the offence

reek hot to heaven; man's strength and nature's energies have united themselves to God's adversary, and then will he surely hurl them down, then will the King surely bleed. The King may die for his people's wickedness, but, in this case, he will surely go to the prison and the grave for his own.

XXII.

WAR AND THE FINAL CESSATION OF ALL HOSTILITY.

[Preached before the University of Cambridge, on Wednesday, March 12, 1800, being the day appointed for a General Fast.]

As to war, if it be the means of wrong and violence, it is the *sole* means of justice amongst nations.

Burke's two Letters on the proposals for Peace with the Regicide Directory of France, London 1796, *p.* 109

Οὗτοι δικάζει ταῦτα μαρτύρων ὕπο
Ἄρης· τὸ νεῖκος δ' ἐκ ἐν ἀργύρᾳ λαβῇ
Ἔλυσεν· ἀλλὰ πολλὰ γίνεται πάρος
Πεσήματ' ἀνδρῶν, κἀπολακτισμοὶ βίᾳ.

ÆSCHYL. SUPPL. 941.

ISAIAH ii. 4.

He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

THE calamity of war has been often, and with good reason, deplored. It is a great calamity; a

calamity made for tears and wringing of hands. It is justly classed with the other two scourges of the earth, famine and pestilence. Sometimes of the three, one comes alone, and it is enough, when separate, for woe: but the two are sometimes to be seen riding together in war's chariot. We have it upon judgment's record, that before a marching army a land has been, as the garden of Eden, behind it a desolate wilderness*.

Yet in our laments for such a calamity, as in other cases, where our tears do, or are ready to fall, it will be necessary, after yielding for a while to the heart's movement, to call our reason to our aid to save the honour of our reason. We then suffer no disparagement or loss. Our pity shall then not be our weakness; it shall have its purgation by this tragic scene. True pity is ever, after its exercise, grave and thoughtful; it braces the mind, not to complaint, but to acquiescence; it ever leads to sober, humble meditation.

That pity, which terminates in querulous invective, is but hypocrisy's pity. In this instance, if we sigh over war's miseries, let our compassion be the true, let it lead us to serious reflection on the ways of Providence, who has appointed no umpire in nations' quarrels, but the sword, no decision of their wrong, but the battle's.

Let us begin our reflections by bringing before our view the surface of the globe, we live on. We can easily conceive the map spread out before us. And, as we look upon it, it is cut, we observe, into distinct, though irregular portions by lines, which seem to go round them, as a girdle, or a plough's

* Joel ii. 3.

furrow. Of what sort these lines are, is not material to our present thoughts. They are the boundaries, which enclose and separate nations. They are, some of them, the frontier, which nature has appeared to provide, and some of them the barriers, which the skill of man has made with nature's help. It is of more importance here to consider, that these distinct portions of the earth, so bounded and divided, are, if we may be allowed the language, the separate nests, the separate encampments of the human race, and that with within these stations, men are as much apart from each other, as other animals are, by a difference in their species. Some of the circumstances, which have occasioned this separation are doubtless such, as must ever arise from the brute part of our constitution, from that, in which we participate with our fellow animals, from the principle, which ever makes us fear want, pain, and danger, and which is greedy, aspiring, and jealous. But these and all the other causes, whatever they are, may drop from us, at present, without loss. It is clear that men, though brethren, are by these barriers as much separated from each other, as the feathered tribe in the branches of the forest, from the deer, which range below, as the flock on the mountain's side, from the herd in the pasture of the valley.

As we are looking on the earth's map, thus parcelled and cut out into states and kingdoms, before we part with this help to our thoughts, let us consider, in what consists the strength of every people. If we were to estimate the strength of a herd of animals, we should of course, direct our attention to their number, to their size, to their look and speed;

we should add also, to the sum of their strength the tooth, the horn, and the hoof. In like manner, if we take the account of a nation's strength, we first consider the multitude, the countenance, the step, the make and muscle of the limbs, and we then add the strength, which wealth can purchase, the strength, which man's strength can give impulse to, and his cunning give energy, the engines of slaughter and battery, the sword, the bayonet, the cannon, the fortress, the arsenal, the resisting strength of inert matter, the whelming might of waters, the destroying strength of fire. This sum gives the sum of the strength of every people, though in different allotments and proportions.

Here, as we look on the map before us, our reflections might take a terrific form. If all these different parcels of strength, of man's strength, and nature's, under man's controul, were collected into one, there were enough to go to war with heaven. We all know the pride and swell of strength; we all feel it; and we cannot but be certain, that in such a mass, as this, there would be a swell, that in its stretch would burst the bands of every yoke, that would submit to no dominion, not to God's. Strength only bows to superior strength, to nothing else. This, we speak of, certainly could not obey a sway, in which mercy was a principal ingredient. Happily for mankind, their name and speech are not one. The attempt to collect all into one was early resisted and confounded by the interference of heaven. He, who meant to give mercy its full opportunity, weakened the pride of man, by calling him away to the ends of the earth and settling him in different

and in hostile tribes. He divided, that he might rule *.

Even in the separation, the view is exceedingly tremendous. We see lying on the surface of the earth immense masses of strength, not inert, or cumbered with their size, but quick and living, not torpid or lethargic, but moving, heaving, restless, never slumbering. The prophet Daniel in his visions, had brought before him beasts of terrible figure, as the emblems of states and empires. And, in truth, it appears, that they are apter emblems, than at first might be thought. What other resemblances indeed, can be more apt? These living masses of strength, nations and empires, lie couched on the earth's plain with their eye and aspect ever on each other. They have the horn, with which to push, the wing, with which to fly to their prey, and the iron teeth, with which to break in pieces and devour; they have too, the roar of terror. They are active to assault and annoy; they are greedy of sustenance; they never have enough; of courage too, to suffer pain, privation, hunger; to be struck, and not to yield, to be wounded, and not to faint. Neither are they sinew or muscle only; from their wounds and gashes can flow streams of blood.

These however, are not all the points of likeness. There remains one more for our thoughts of a nature sufficient to appall them. The lion and the tiger in their roam for prey, in their chace of the herd, or in their fight, sin not. Neither do nations sin in their battle or in their conquest.

It is plain, there is no guilt to the beasts of the

* Gen. xi. 1—9.

forest, for they are under no law. Of the animal creation, it has pleased God to subject man alone to law and precept. Man is the only sacred animal. The rest are delivered over, in displeasure, to be hunted, to be torn, to be trampled on, to be slaughtered, to be devoured by man and by one another. In every instance, excepting one, law and precept are provided to regulate human actions, to controul the exercise and impulse of man's strength. The exception is the case, where the strength is employed in a nation's war, where the actions are the actions of battle.

The divine regimen bears on the individual's strength. There is a law for or against the beatings of his heart, the movements of his eye, the words of his lips, the efforts and strength of his arm. There is a law for or against every portion of his strength, considered by itself, and also for or against the use of the whole, so considered. There is a law for his temperance, for his sobriety, for his chastity, the nurture and preservation of his strength, and against his drunkenness, lewdness, intemperance, the waste or frenzy of his strength. The Scripture abounds with these and the like laws. But when the individual's strength is considered, as blended and mixed in the whole strength of the state, of which strength it is a part, he may give his hand, his heart, his wealth to his country's battle; he sins not. No law touches on this use of his strength. And, *where no law is, there is no transgression.**

The divine regimen bears likewise, on the two portions of strength, into which the strength of each

* Rom. iv. 15. 1 John iii. 4.

state is divided, on the subject's, and on the governors', which are the two, which make up the whole mass.* That the Scripture should speak more to the individual, than when viewed in either of these public relations, can be no matter of surprize, because the situation of the individual has greater variety in it. These are but two of the many relations of man. The many are the individual's. Yet perhaps, the Scripture speaks more on each of these, than on any other. These are of high importance in society's mechanism; they respectively belong to the two great divisions of every people, and are a ligature, which ties them together.

As to the subject's strength, there is a law for his fear of the governors' authority, for his submission to all other law, God's and man's, political or religious law, for his reverence to the pure doctrines and institutes of religion, as well as to the ordinary, and perhaps, not easier principles of justice; there is a law for his assistance to the governors' strength, for contribution, for payments which are to support and feed it. Nor is this all the chapter of law, to which he is held. He is bound, by undeniable inferences from these heads of law, not to defraud his governors' strength, not to cheat in payments of revenue, not to be heretical, seditious, or rebellious; not to be guilty of any treachery to his country's strength, not to drop any words, (for words can weaken and strengthen, can heal and kill,) which may dispirit his country, and encourage the adversary; not to comfort or solace in any wise the King's enemies. Nay more, he is held to go

* See the preceding Sermon, on the *Origin and Ends of Government.*

heartily to battle with his governors, to burn, to destroy, to waste the enemy's strength, not necessarily to put on armour, but to be ready for the call to battle, to be in battle with them in his spirit, in his temper, in his prayers.

As to the governors' strength, which is always the main fighting strength of the state, the strength, which is usually, put in array for actual battle, it is clearly exempt from all law on this point. There is none for it to obey, either in Scripture, or in just conclusions from it. It is indeed, under a law, to hide beneath its wings the trembling, unembodied strength of the subject, to place in security the helpless, shapeless multitude, to distribute justice evenly, to guard the true principles of law and religion, to shield the poor man's mercies. It is under a law not to be guilty of domestic oppression, to do at home none of that evil, to which power is often tempted by the counsels of suspicion, or perfidy. But it is under no law, as to engaging in war. It may sheath, or unsheath the sword at its own discretion. It may assemble its armies, which are a part of the government; it may point its artillery, which are a part of its strength, according to the impulse of appetite, to the view of advantage, to the lust of spoil, to the feelings of hunger or affront, to the caprice of its own rapacious nature.

When such terms, as ambition, injustice, are applied to a nation's conduct in going to war, they are not in strictness, ever true. These terms suppose the existence of a law, which is violated. We shall perhaps, hereafter see, in what sense they may be applied to such conduct. We now only repeat the Scripture maxim; *where no law is, there is no*

transgression. There is no law for beasts of prey, they cannot sin, as such.

The battle between nations may be eternal. And in fact, their hostility is eternal, though it does not always appear under the form and denomination of battle. Battle is but one species of warfare. It is indeed, the worst, but if they cease from it, there remains much other strife, from all of which they never cease.

A truce between nations will not be thought a cessation from hostility. It is as the breathing of the lion and the tiger after weariness in fight. They still lie facing each other. Though the tumult be hushed, yet the menace and the song of war are still heard. Even the parley of words on these occasions, is exceeding fierce. Have they ceased from hostility, whose spears meet in the midst, though for weariness they do not strike?

An alliance between nations to assail or repel a common enemy is but an unsocial, distrustful union. It is as the agreement of the lion and the tiger to chase the same prey. In the common pursuit they are furious with each other; in the common yoke the one struggles against the other. They aim, each of them, at little more than the gratification of their own appetite, and from mistake, or misapprehension, are ever ready to give up their object, and begin a brothers' quarrel. Nor are the usual hostilities of peace wanting between them.

Peace is a charming sound. Yet the magic of the sound, like all other magic, has delusion in it. There is but one peace, that will ever come to nations, in which the sword will be turned into the ploughshare, and the spear into the pruning hook,

in which war will be learned no more. In the peace, we now can have, the sword indeed, is sheathed, and the cannon laid up, but it is the savage part only of hostility, which is gone; and, though that is the greater and the worse, yet the other still remains.

The peace, we now can have, is as the retreat of the lion and the tiger into their dens to relieve their weariness and heal their wounds. In their pain, in the remembrance of their wrongs, they will start up ever and anon to renew the fight. The one will echo back the other's howl. War is still learned at home. The nations are each, engaged in healing and nourishing their exhausted strength for future warfare. There is much suspicion, much hate, long memory of wounds, of pain, and loss of sustenance. In the very intercourse of peace they are still at spoil on each other. In the very barter and exchange of commodities, they are feeding their own and sucking the other's strength. If we travel in the other's land, it is not the journey of safety or comfort. We are afraid; we feel, we are solitary, not connected, not tied in one interest. We are strangers, a word not much different in meaning from a foe, and in one language, anciently the same*. We have the heart of a stranger in the hospitality,† we meet with, and which itself, is but the toleration of an enemy, and has required all the laws of pity and of honour to guard and enforce it.‡ Our ears too, are assailed by menaces, which cannot be despised, either from their number, or the

* Cic. de Off. Lib. I. C. 12. See also Hom. Il. E. 214. with schol. Didym.
† Eurip. Phœn. 404. Ecclesiasticus 29. 24, &c.
‡ Hooker's Eccles. Polity, B. VIII. p. 373. Vol. 3. note.

weight of their significance. Their dread echo is always, at every point of every frontier. We pass to each other, even in peace, through gates of brass and armed files, and we never fail to hear it.

The reflections, which have arisen before us, will probably, seem to be of a most tremendous and fearful nature. And indeed, they are tremendous and big with fear. The eye of the mind perhaps, is unable to take in living forms of such terrific magnitude, yet that, which can be fairly seen and justly imagined, is enough to cast a sickly hue over the stoutest look. The prophet, after his vision of the beasts, *fainted and was sick for days*. But our fear, as our pity did in the contemplation of war's calamities, may, by this sight, attain its purgation. After our tremor shall return a health and vigour, as after sickness. We shall be led to further meditation on the plans of God, we shall find repose to our spirits in his contrivance to soften down the ferocity of nations, to bruise these monsters to his yoke, to make the lion and the tiger play together, as lambs.

We before mentioned one method, which was early taken as preparatory to this happy conclusion of the world's long strife. It was, by breaking up the foundations of the first kingdom after the flood when the people were all one, and by scattering them over the earth in different communities. That kingdom had begun to match its strength with God's; and, had the design prospered, had mankind become one state, he, who ruleth in heaven above all, must ever afterwards have reigned in the character of the Omnipotent, not of Redeemer; he must ever afterwards have borne in his hand the iron rod of venge-

ance and indignation; he could never have shewn the other sceptre, with which he wishes to rule, the sceptre, which is studded with gems of mercy.

This was the first contrivance of divine Providence, an act indeed, of wrath, but, as usual with him, a punishment anticipating future advantage. Having split the power, he could now give to each parcel or mass, what he was pleased in one instance to call *the heart of a man.* We shall adopt the expression; it is very compendious, and intelligible.

The instance, in which it occurs, is in the vision of Daniel. *I saw,* says the prophet, *in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.**

The expression is exceedingly beautiful. What is exactly meant by the plucking of the wings, it is not necessary to enquire with nicety. It was probably, the King's personal adversity and suffering; the fading of his glory, not of his power, intended to tame his pride, to teach him mercy and righteousness, to make his heart soft and tender, and above all, by a reign of mercy and righteousness to infuse the life blood of his heart into the empire, he governed.

The expression is exceedingly significant. We cannot indeed, perceive fibres and nerves, but we can perceive a general beat, a general feeling. We cannot discern flesh, but we can discern a softness

* Dan. vii. 2, 3, 4.

coming over the mighty muscles and strength of a nation. Even through the iron scales, which clothe and fence a state, we can see a movement springing from the central point, which is the heart of the King, and radiating in every direction through every channel and vein to every extremity.

We will venture to say, how in the mercy of God to man, this heart comes to a nation, and how its exercise, or affection appears.

It comes by priests, by lawgivers, by philosophers, by schools, by education, by the nurse's care, the mother's anxiety, the father's severe brow. It comes by letters, by science, by every art, by sculpture, painting, and poetry; by the song on war, on peace, on domestic virtue, on a beloved and magnanimous King; by the Iliad, by the Odyssey, by tragedy, by comedy. It comes by sympathy, by love, by the marriage union, by friendship, generosity, meekness, temperance; by every virtue and example of virtue. It comes by sentiments of chivalry, by romance, by music, by decorations, and magnificence of buildings; by the culture of the body, by comfortable clothing, by fashions in dress, by luxury and commerce. It comes by the severity, the melancholy, and benignity of the countenance; by rules of politeness, ceremonies, formalities, solemnities. It comes by the rites attendant on law and religion; by the oath of office, by the venerable assembly, by the judge's procession and trumpets, by the disgrace and punishment of crimes; by public prayer, public fasts; by meditation, by the Bible, by the consecration of churches, by the sacred festival, by the cathedral's gloom and choir; by catechizing, by confirmation,

by the burial of the dead, by the observance of the sabbath, by the sacraments, by the preaching of the Gospel, by faith in the atonement of the cross, by the patience and martyrdom of the Saints, by the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost.

The exercise of a nation's heart appears, in its imposing on its own ferocity restraints, in its submitting to checks on the levers and limbs of its strength, in its consenting to be one of the aggregate commonwealth of nations, in its conforming to a public, general law, though in strictness, improperly called a law. It appears in the sending and receiving of embassies, and in the forming of treaties of intercourse. It appears in allowing the soldier to judge of the pleas of humanity, in not putting to death the prisoner taken in battle, in alleviating the horrors of the prison, in healing the wounded enemy, in shewing the white banner, in signing of capitulations. It appears in appointing one alone to give the signal for battle, in committing to him the sceptre, which is to heave, or press to quiet the nation's strength,* in placing him aloft, upon a throne, that all nations, as well as his own, may see him,† in hanging round his neck a chain of golden

* The antient titles of Kings and Heroes were βία, ἀλκή, σθένος, μένος, ἴς, referring doubtless, to this exercise and effort of power, as well as to their personal puissance and valour in the field. The modern philosophical description of equal coarseness and accuracy, though not of equal emphasis and simplicity with the heathen's, is, executive power, but, which Christian lawgivers, with a blameless fraud, have veiled under the milder names of excellency, or majesty. They understood it's nature, but were too wise and too humane, not to dignify the awful privilege, and smooth the appearances of that, which nakedly considered, in the exercise and effect, is only brute strength.

† The investiture of one or more persons in a state with the privilege of making war or peace at discretion is a provision in conformity to the law of nations, to which code it belongs, in order that nations may approach each other, after the manner of men, and come, as individuals, to conference and

links, of links of every virtue and every grace; of courage, to let slip the dogs of war; of perseverance,

debate; in order further, that praise and blame may respectively influence the negotiating parties, stimulate to moderation and mercy, and discourage violence and cruelty.

It is however, worthy of consideration, that in this investiture an office is created, if not without duties, yet without responsibility to man. The law of the state makes the privilege discretionary. By the divine precepts alone, which may be said perhaps, to prescribe to all situations the general principles of justice and mercy, can duties be annexed to this office, and the responsibility can only be to God. Yet, admitting this responsibility, on account of the intricacies, which entangle the relations of states to each other, on account of the uncertainty in the application of justice and mercy to interests, so complicated, and of such large extent, on account too, of the difficulty in deciding, wherein the truest exercise of compassion lies, it shall not be a King's principal fault, in the courts of heaven, that his reign has been warlike. Sometimes indeed, the insatiate ambition and remorseless iniquities, which instigate and prolong a war shall be plain to all the world, as in the instance of the war, in which Europe is now engaged, begun and prolonged by the revolutionary rulers of France. Yet we may almost venture to say, in general, that war, though put under this appointment and regulation, is nearly allied, and for the reasons given, to the other two plagues of the earth, famine and pestilence, even in this important point, as to the blame of the author or agent. Those two are, literally, the act and visitation of God, and the sword, though in the hands of man, is probably, to be so considered much more, than it usually is.

We may ask the question; why may not man be employed for purposes of vengeance, as well as the wind, the flood, the drought, or the locust, and be equally without blame? The contrivance to use man's arm, as a mere weapon, to inflict punishment on himself, or his fellow men, or on both himself and them, is not impossible. We see and admit a like contrivance in the execution of criminal justice at home. Not so perhaps, when our feelings to their honour, or their shame, take an interest in the fate of nations. Yet the Scripture, which sometimes classes together, as like ministers of wrath, famine, pestilence, and the sword, is certainly silent as to the blame of the last. Will it be presumption to say, that this silence gives an intimation of such a contrivance? Nor are some expressions in Scripture without a meaning, which warrants the idea of such a design. The shout of one battle is, *The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.** Babylon is *the hammer* of the earth;† the Assyrian *the rod* of Jehovah's anger,‡ and Media and Persia his *armoury*.§ A celebrated heathen government had amongst its first institutions a college of priests, who were to devote its enemies to the vengeance of the gods, and to hurl the bloody javelin, not only as the first act of hostility,‖ but also in token of the character, in which its legions were about to appear. Nor is the opening of the temple of Janus without an import bearing on this subject. To him, from whom originate all things, was war in a peculiar manner, by a distinguished and momentous ceremony referred, as

* Judges vii. † Jer. l. 23. ‡ Isa. x. 5. § Jer. l. 25.
‖ Hooke's Rom. Hist. Vol 1, p. 121—123. 8vo. Ed. 4th. London, 1766.

not to be battered down by misfortune, the enemy's threatenings, or the people's fears; of anxiety, to watch the paw and the spring of the tiger adversary; of wisdom, to judge of challenge and aggression; of prudence, to chuse the less of two calamities; of piety, to mark heaven's omens; of humility, to renounce the love of glory; of mercy, to renounce the love of blood. It appears in esteeming him to be more virtuous, than other men, in speaking of him with reverence and love, in hailing him, in sacred and solemn forms, as the defender of the faith of Christ, in naming him, in prayer, as a most religious, gracious King.

to its mover and God.* Neither have heathens and Christians, in all ages, done otherwise than confess by the consecrated standard, whose the armies are, it leads to the field. They admit, that they are the hosts, of which God is the Lord, that their array is for heaven's purposes, not their own.

If then a nation's arm lifted up for fight, be only as the lifting up of a weapon, these conclusions force themselves upon us; that the chief, if not the only security against the wanton or mistaken use of the high discretionary privilege entrusted to the King is in his personal qualities, especially, in his milder feelings and virtues, in his "King-becoming graces;" that the management of the King's will, in this point, is, in the same sense, the secret act and operation of divine Providence, as the hiss, which calls, or leads away the locust, or, as the controul of the winds, the waters, and the drought; and, that the provisions devised in the law of nations, and above all, this heaven-descended provision in the King's being a man of wisdom, mercy and righteousness, are of the same sort with those, which are contrived by man's ingenuity and God's and man's mercy, to avert a calamity, which the caterpillar, or the elements seem to menace, or, when come, to shorten its duration, and lesson its pressure.

Let complainants on the subject of war, if they wish to be congratulated on having feelings, like an inspired prophet's, learn to bound their complaints by his devotional ejaculation; *O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still.*† And let all, who call themselves Christians, remark the Apostle's exhortation; *I exhort, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and GIVING OF THANKS be made for all men; for Kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*‡

* Heyn. Excurs. V. in Virg. Æn. vii. Vol. 3. Ed. 1. Lond. 1793. Sir W. Jones's Works, Vol. 1. pp. 234, 235. 4to. Lond. 1799.

† Jer. xlvii. 6. ‡ 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

Like the heart of a man, this heart of a nation inculcates on itself, what promotes the habit of its virtue. It brightens the polish, it has taken. It cherishes the science, law, and religion, by which its softness comes. It grudges not its tenth to their priests and holy children. It esteems their labours to be better, than agriculture's produce, or the loom's work. It provides for them the laurel crown, the linen robe, and white wand. It raises them to dignity, it places them by the side of the King for glory, beauty, and advantage, both his and their own.

It deepens the lines of the impression, it has received. It goes to the temple before battle. It prays against the visitation of the sword, as a plague of God. It mourns over that, which it is about to take into its hands. It prays for forgiveness of the breaches of the public law, it has consented to be under, though not bound to such consent. In this sense it prays against its own ambition, injustice, and love of rapine. It appoints fasts before battle. It fasts against its own strength; it weakens itself, and then, so weakened, lies prostrate before the superior strength of God. It seeks in this humiliation and acknowledgment the anointing from above, before it descend on the plain to wrestle.

Let us now attend to the conclusions, to which our reflections bring us. They are conclusions, as interesting perhaps, as the reflections themselves.

Let this and every other nation consider, what is their duty in the present crisis.

What the heart of a nation is, we have perhaps, sufficiently explained. And it must appear from history, and the description given, that all nations,

till of late, have had it. They have all, till our day, had it, differing indeed, in particulars, but agreeing in the general likeness. Even the fierce Roman republic, the most terrible of the beasts in the prophet's vision, *diverse from all the others*, even that, which in its legions used the people's muscles, as iron is now used, had this heart.

A republic has arisen, in our day, which has torn this heart out of its own bowels. With blasphemies and curses they first mangled it, and then tore it out. The deed could not be done, but with the most dreadful laceration. The heart had shot deep with its fibres into the soil, but by unceasing labour, unwearied pains they at last, succeeded, and then cast it out bleeding to the world—When to be replaced? Never, but by the steady purpose conceived in the heart of every other nation, to conquer or to die in the attempt.

This republic has tried to take to itself another heart, a heart, quite unlike the former, a heart, which cannot be described, cannot be looked on. It resembles the heart of the host, which is reigned over in Hell—How is this design to be prevented? Never, but by the steady purpose conceived in the heart of every other nation to conquer or to die in the attempt.

If the French republic is not conquered, it will tear out our heart, aud put its own into our bosom.

In this address and warning we have spoken, what will perhaps, never reach the ear, it is meant for, and to a power, which it is not always safe to warn. Yet England has not yet learned to despise her priests. She gives a value, though not the full, for sacred admonition. In what follows, we mean

words for an ear, which is nearer to listen, and is more quick of hearing.

Whence the heart of a nation comes, we have perhaps, sufficiently explained. And it must appear, to what most awful obligations and duty are held all those, from whom this heart takes its texture and shape, our King, our Princes, our Nobles, all, who wear the badge of office or honour; all priests, judges, senators, pleaders, interpreters of law; all instructers of youth, all seminaries of education, all parents, all learned men, all professors of science and art, all teachers of manners. Upon them depends the fashion of the nation's heart. By them it is to be chastised, refined, and purified. By them is the state to lose the character and title of the beast of prey. By them are the iron scales to fall off, and a skin of youth, beauty, freshness and polish to come upon it. By them it is to be made so tame and gentle, as that a child may lead it. By them, and their fellows and brethren in other nations, are to be reported from sea to sea the sounds, which issue from the throne in Sion, *the judgment among the nations, and the rebuke of many people*, the lessons of the monitor Judge and teacher King;* by them are to come the glories of the reign of Jesus Christ, when no iron weapon shall be found in any land, but the ploughshare, and the pruning hook.

How ought they then to consider, what their temper and conduct are; how ought they to reflect, that by mistake, by folly, by rudeness, by bad example, by corrupt sentiment, by false philosophy, by heresy, by impenitence, by contempt of law and

* Vitring. in Isai. ii. 4. xi. 4.

religion, by any sentiment or action, which is base, mean, or evil, they are fostering the brutishness of the nation, keeping up contention and strife throughout the world, encouraging war and shedding of blood, barring from God's mercy their fellow men, the poor, their own dependants, their own sons and daughters, hindering the descent of the Holy Ghost upon earth, delaying the reign of him, who died to save and bless the world.

How ought they to reflect on the guilt of such conduct, which is not confined to one little spot or corner, but reaches and touches by links, which go round the globe, the happiness, the refinement, the peace, the salvation of all mankind now living, and of all future generations. How ought they to reflect on the blessing and reward of a contrary conduct, which is ever contributing to banish to their own place, all malice, wrath, jealousy, envy, revenge, cruelty, which heaps *coals of fire* on every hard mass, and from iron brings out gold, from brass silver, from stones gems; the gold, the silver, and the gems, which form the walls, the gates, and the battlements of the last city to be built, the city of God and of his Christ.

XXIII.

THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE STATE.

[Preached before the University of Cambridge, November 2, 1800, being the day of Commemoration of Benefactors.]

PROV. viii. 15.

By me Kings reign and Princes decree justice.

THE first and highest consecration of any thing, which is indeed sacred, is, when it is separated from other things of the like kind by an express divine command. In the sabbath we have an example of this consecration; it is a portion of time severed from the other time by a precept delivered from heaven, when the days of time began. And it has been shewn in an argument *, which has not been contradicted, as far as I know, that the governing power in every state is, by actual revelation, when it can claim under this revelation, separated from the other men of the state, from the other, the subject power. Government is a sacred power, of the first order of sacred things.

* See the Sermon, on the *Origin and Ends of Government.*

The application of any thing, which is thus consecrated, may justly be expected to be very important. The sabbath is for rest from labour, for relief under a curse, for true worship, for holy meditation, for hope of a future uninterrupted rest, the bliss of man. And in the argument, we refer to, the principal ends, for which the ordinance of goverment was given, were at the same time, not forgotten. It was shewn, that this power is the natural, settled protector and guardian of all virtue, all just sentiment, right feeling, lawful employment, lawful invention, true science, true genius, true taste; that it is the natural, settled ally of the true church of Jesus Christ; and that it frowns upon, intimidates, chains down, or actually punishes every thing, which is adverse to these.

Now, in the view of such an argument, if it at all convince, or deserve attention, it is probable, that different persons will be differently affected. Like every other argument, it will doubtless, admit of abating and weakening exceptions or consequences, or of confirming and collateral proof or corollary. Sensible, how much power corrupts the heart, and read in the history of man's degeneracy, some will see nothing in the description of a consecrated sovereignty, but encroachment, oppression and slavery. They will not perhaps, sufficiently bear in mind, that there is no good provision either of God or man, which has not its concomitant abuse, that truth and falshood, virtue and vice, lawful and unlawful indulgence are alike in their trappings and run in pairs. We may be allowed to take up the other, better corollary, for we may be allowed to be partial. We may be also, permitted to think, that,

if the inference or illustration, we offer, be fairly stated, it may serve, in some sort, as a check to the degeneracy, which is feared.

What we offer, in confirmation, is this; that, when we represent the governors of a state, as incorporated under heaven's charter, and made a holy society, the general sense of mankind gives a suitable response to this account. They themselves separate the magistrate from the common herd and lot of men. In their judgment, his character and habits are to bear a comparison, which shall not sink him much below, with those of the priest. He is to be grave, sober, continent, wise; he is to be a man, who can maintain the silence and serenity of wisdom, who can discern between sophistry and truth, between fraud and right, who is not to be bribed by gold or by praise; qualifications, all these, not different from the qualifications of the priesthood. The priest may be more, but the preeminence is chiefly in degree, not in kind. Mankind also, think, that the magistrate is to be educated, kept apart, and schooled, as the priest, that his childhood and youth are to be preserved with the same care from the sight and contagion of every thing unseemly, base, and evil. There shall be no essential distinction, as our country's institutions tell us, between the lessons and discipline, which he shall learn, who is hereafter in the senate to deliberate and enact, or, in the hall to deal out justice, and those, which he shall submit to, who is hereafter to deal out the other blessings from the altar. If ever we should be so deluded, as to make an essential distinction, we frustrate the design of God, and oppose and confound the general sense of mankind.

An inference, we deduce, is this; that, as the power of government, founded on the ordinance of God, is associated to his power, there can be no contrariety in the use and application of these two powers; there must be harmony between them. The partner in the throne of God cannot have other aims, than God himself; if he had, it were no partnership. Whatever law, or scheme the power of God is engaged to honour and protect, the same honour and protection must the magistrate afford, where his power can apply. If the arm of the one be raised against crime, the same crime must the arm of the other menace; they must be joint pursuers of blood, and joint avengers of fraud.

Still more than this; if it be the main care and anxiety of the divine mind to establish the church of Christ, in opposition to evil, or mistaken men, and the power and devices of Satan, the same care and anxiety is the mind of the magistrate to feel. He is to write on his memory the creeds of the church as well as the statutes of the land, and for the same reasons; for God and his Son's honor's sake, and for his own, and his country's benefit. He is to guard the baptism of the children of the state, and the confession of the pastor and flock of the church, with as much vigilance, as the life and property of all. In the row of thrones, on which his brethren are seated, either, as armed sentinels, or as peaceful watchmen, he is to take care, that there be no stool of mutiny. He is to provide, that no infidel or apostate speak in that council; even the voice of a friend is not there to be listened to, if in the truth, he holds, there be an error mixed of dangerous, or discolouring alloy. The principalities of the state,

being allied to God, are to be men of God. With the guides and watchmen of the church, they too, are to have a confession and a test, to try their understanding and their bosom. Associates of the Supreme Principality, they must be animated with his heart and soul; their counsels and actions are to be emanations of his counsels and energies. They are to be, as Gods*.

* The reproof of a corrupt order of men, who were to interpret or administer law and justice, to make it more impressive, is introduced by the Psalmist with the account of their high origin, connexion, and character. *God standeth in the congregation of princes: he is a judge among Gods. How long will ye give wrong judgment, &c.* The prediction of their disgrace and punishment has a like preamble. *I have said, ye are Gods; and ye are all the* CHILDREN *of the most Highest. But ye shall die like men: and fall after the manner of him, who is but one, O princes.* Psalm lxxxii.* On the death of a beloved patriot son and warrior, who had fallen in battle, the testimony of the heathen King, his father, was, as follows,

Ἕκτορά θ', ὃς θεὸς ἔσκε μέτ' ἀνδράσιν,

Hom. Il. ω. 258.

It was spoken in the presence of his surviving brethren, partly to upbraid, and partly to remind them, how the deceased had ever acted suitably to his birth and station.

If the reader further recollects the epithets, διογενής, διοτρεφής, Διὸς υἱός, παῖδες θεῶν, Κρόνου γόνος, Κρόνου πάρεδρος, ἥρως θεὸς, and that the persons, to whom they are applied, are judges, counsellors of state, heroes and kings, he will probably, be inclined to believe, that such appellations are not founded on the fable or legend, which is commonly supposed to authorize them; he will see through the disguise, or plea, with which degeneracy in religious sentiment, or groping superstition overcast the truth, it held. He will not necessarily think, that the heathens had this truth from the revelations, which are a part of the Jewish history. There were other holy writings, besides those preserved in the family or line, in which our Saviour came, and which contained corresponding, inspired doctrine and precept. The family indeed, which kept them, was not so favoured of heaven, nor so holy, as the Jewish, and probably, was not bound in the same express manner, to the same care and attention in preserving them. And consequently, with the exception of the book of Job, which, if not written by a Jew, belongs to the Gentile volume, they are come down to us, much blotted, and much interpolated. Let Christian divines attend to this point. It is of great importance, nor need the consequences be feared. They have the volume of the Jewish and Christian churches, to try the other volume by.

* Poli Synop. in loc.

If ever the magistracy of this country should be so deluded, as to disclaim this union of their power with God's, we might then expect to see the like to what has happened in a neighbouring kingdom. The rulers there, in the hearing of all the world, disclaimed this union, and in the sight of all, who heard them, they immediately passed over to the side of Satan, and retaining the shape of men, became fiends in thought and deed. They vilified the laws of God ; they varied some of them ; they apologized for every crime ; they saw torrents of blood flow, and applauded the murderers : plaudits, like to those, which a poet feigns to have been looked for in Hell, at the telling of the world's ruin and havock.*

Another inference, we deduce, is this ; that, as the governing power in a state is partner with the power of God, enthroned with him, and having like counsel and purpose, and as the first general end of government must be of necessity, to govern, that is, to make laws for the subject to obey, otherwise not able to obey, the laws proceeding from this power, not contradictory to the laws of his partner, become the laws of God ; they become rules ranging beneath his ; they form a code supplemental to his, and are adopted by him. The magistracy is not only a holy incorporation, but their acts are holy too. Their laws and the sanctions of their laws are holy. As our obedience is holy, so their protection is a holy superintendance ; the sound of their cannon, is, as the thunder of God, and the shade of our garden vine a holy shade. If the divine legislation and enactments, as proceeding

* Milton, P. L. B. X. l. 504, &c.

from a holy person, be holy, human legislation and enactments must be holy too. The legislatures are one, in consent, and the magistrate has this in common with the great source and fountain of all things, that he too is a fountain of religion, ordaining duties, inventing virtue for men*. He is here above the

* Ὁρᾷς, ὅτι ὁ ἐν Δελφοῖς θεὸς, ὅταν τις αὐτὸν ἐπερωτᾷ, πῶς ἂν τοῖς θεοῖς χαρίζοιτο, ἀποκρίνεται, νόμῳ πόλεως. Νόμος δὲ ἡπτε ΠΑΝΤΑΧΟΥ ἐστι, Κατὰ δύναμιν ἱεροῖς θεοὺς ἀρέσκεσθαι. Πῶς οὖν ἄν τις κάλλιον καὶ ἐυσεβέστερον τιμῴη θεοὺς, ἢ, ὡς αὐτοὶ κελεύουσιν, ἑτω ποιῶν; Xenoph. Memorab. L. IV. C. III. s. 16. Simpson. ed. We, on a former occasion, offered a comment on these words;* we now propose a second. The answer of the oracle is, we observe, restricted by Socrates to that law of the state, which enjoined sacrifices, the sacrifice of expiation, and the offering of gratitude, on the principle, no doubt, that the answer was general to all enquirers of all countries, that this law was common to all states, and the main law for man to keep. But we now see, that the answer is not to be restricted to any one universal law alone. It was indeed, at that time, the main law of the world, to make the sacrifice of atonement with reference to the future great Atonement, as it is now, to believe in this Atonement, which needs not to be made again, yet the oracle certainly meant to include all other moral law adopted by each state, and all political law enacted by it. He sent back every enquirer to obey his country's legislature. Neither was Socrates himself ignorant, that obedience here was righteousness. Φημὶ ἐγὼ τὸ νόμιμον δίκαιον εἶναι. Xenoph. Memorab. L. IV. C. IV. s. 12. The preeminence and universality of sacrifice were certainly the reasons of his giving so limited an interpretation to the answer of the oracle.

It may not be amiss to remark in this place, that, as it was the preeminent law of heathen states, to offer the sacrifice of expiation, so in England, the construction of whose state excells in wisdom, it is also, her preeminent law, that all her children believe in the atonement, of which the ancient was the type. Her magistracy, the flower and pattern of the people, do all profess this faith; their faith is their title to their chair. Her officers have all commemorated this sacrifice; they have, all, eaten the Bread, and drunk the Wine. Let the advocates for the repeal of this law learn wisdom from heathens. If it be, that they are ignorant of antiquity, or that their feelings are piqued, that ignorance and that pique are to be lamented, but, if they do in truth and sincerity admit, that, to believe in the atonement of the cross, is the cardinal law of God, will they ever again try to separate it from the patronage of the state? Will they ever again utter a word in mockery of that, which keeps Jews, Arians, Socinians, Infidels, and Atheists, the adversaries of God and Christ, from the seat of authority, which prevents them from making law, who execrate, or deny this law? Will they not kiss with reverence that sacred test, that preaching, promulgating test, sounding forth in every corner of the land the law, which is the life of men.

* See note in the Sermon on, *the Origin and Ends of Government.*

priesthood. The priest is only the ministering officer of religion, is himself subject, whilst the magistrate both enacts and ministers, both makes and distributes virtue, and on this superior, godlike privilege, raises his chair or throne higher than the altar.

In the chronicles of the world, the most ancient and the most revered, magistrates have been called or ranked with Gods, and the reason is now not obscure*. The term *sacred* has been by heathens, applied to kings, to senates and to laws, and we now see a distinctness and force in the meaning †. Christians indeed, have received a maxim, some of this country, have placed it at the head of their political maxims, that religion has little or nothing to do with the state, but we now see it's falshood and refutation. Let it now come down from it's high, domineering position and retreat to falshood's own dark place.

* The epithets given in Homer to the leaders and chieftains of Greece and Asia assembled at Troy are, διος, δαιμόνιος, Θεὸς ὥς, ἠμίθεος, ἀντίθεος, Θεοείκελος, ἰσόθεος, and are now known not to be the language of flattery, or the mere grace of poetry, but true, legitimate titles. To the leader and lawgiver of Israel it was also said, with reference to his authority and office; *Thou shalt be to him instead of God.* Exod. iv. 16, See also, Psalm lxxxii. To which we may add, that in the poet the higher title is commonly connected with another derived from some personal merit. We all remember πόδας ὠκὺς διος Ἀχιλλεύς, and πολύμητις διος Ὀδυσσεύς, and we may here perceive a lustre thrown on each title by the other.

† An early Christian, who will not be suspected of taking Horace or Virgil, for models, scruples not to call the Roman Senate, ἱερὰ σύγκλητος. Justin. Mart. Apol. i. sub init. We think it unnecessary here to refer to heathen witnesses. The epithet given to laws by Trebatius in Horace with the other passages, must be familiar to every literate reader. But we cannot refrain from adding, that we seem now to come near the true reason, why we hear, in the mouths of heathens, cities themselves called, *sacred*, why they speak in this sublime strain, that nothing, which is done on earth, is more acceptable to God, the governor of all the world, and the head of all principality, than the congregating of men into polities, and why the Roman matron taught in the nursery the laws of the twelve tables.

This however, is not all the reproof of these Christians, nor all the refutation of this error.

If all human law, excepting the law of nations, if all the moral collections of reason, if all the answers, maxims, arbitrations, and decisions of jurisprudence are derived from actual revelation ; if these all owe their very being and existence to laws of God, previously revealed, in this case, they become parts of revelation itself, and the magistrate is a dispenser of revelation, as well as the priest. The proof of this supposition would be too long to be now entered on ; it is a proof of large compass and reach. It would depend partly, on history, and partly on argument. The history must shew, that Almighty God was not only the creator, but the tutor, instructor, or, if we may use in it's ancient meaning a more descriptive term, the pædagogue of man ; that God's family, his holy children amongst men, his monarchs, his priests, his judges, his seers, his seats of education, his schools of prophets, his philosophers' retreats, his colleges of wise men dispersed throughout the world, by meditation on the principles received from his instruction, and by the experiences of wisdom in the application of them, made deductions and added other principles ; and that by this his agency connected with man's genius and invention, and continued down through all time, have been gathered and combined the volumes now in our hands, of all moral teaching and of law. The argument must shew, amongst other points, that the fitnesses and relations of things, our capacities of happiness and misery, of suffering and enjoyment are not the first, direct source of any law whatsoever ; that, if prior in contemplation, or in

the order of time and nature to the law, which bears upon them, they still take their moral estimation, and in that sense, their being, subsequent; that, if they shew beforehand their need of the law, or put the after, witnessing, confirming seal to it, they never, but as of petition, dictate the writing; that they do, indeed, enhance the mercy and the wisdom of the legislator, who is pleased to regard them, give a beauty and value to obedience, and aggravate a fault, but that obedience and disobedience are, respectively, the keeping or not keeping the rule only; and that all law stands on authority or power alone. The heads, we have given, of the history, must appear sufficiently plain. The heads of the argument will, perhaps, be liable to the objection of novelty or difficulty, and for this reason we point to an example daily before our eyes, in which a law of God openly tramples on the fitnesses and capacities, adverted to. We come at the food we eat, by the grant of God, through the sufferings and death of thousands of living creatures, concerning whom no one can pretend to say, that their life is not of value to themselves and their mates, or that they have not capacities of enjoyment. By this grant, taken by itself, their fitnesses and capacities cease from all consideration in morals, and, in that sense, cease to be. They recover this being and consideration, so far only, as there are laws, such as the law of compassion, regulating the exercise of the power to destroy.

Admitting then, the truth of this supposition, and it doubtless, is true, the inference, we here propose, is established; the magistrate becomes the brother and the colleague of the Priest. To both

belongs the book of revelation; to the priest indeed, chiefly the original book, to the magistrate, chiefly the supplemental*. For expedience sake, and for other reasons, they have divided their work and duty; the priest inculcates the doctrine chiefly, the magistrate, chiefly the precept. The priest has the care of the more precious part of virtue; he teaches the mystery, which passeth knowledge, he regulates the heart and reins; whilst the other has the care only of the meaner and plainer part; he only rewards the virtue, which mortal eye can see, he only punishes the vice, which witnesses can relate. The one bears in trust the secrets of the grave, the curse of hell, and the bliss of heaven; whilst the other

* The administration of the ordinary principles of justice is called in Scripture, the administration of the revealed word of God. Compare Psalm lxxxii. with St. John x. 34, 35. On the passage quoted in note p. 263, from Xenophon, we now offer a third comment giving a still more exalted signification to the answer of the oracle. The visitants of the temple were referred to the law of their respective states, as to the law derived from actual, divine revelation. The proof is also now fully before us of Socrates's assertion, quoted in the same note, that *obedience to the laws was righteousness*. He indeed attempted the proof, but failed. He on that occasion maintained, that what was expedient, was right. The testimony of Homer, next to an oracle's, is this,

——— δικασπόλοι, οἵτε θέμιστας
Ἱερὸς Διὸς εἰρύαται. Hom. Il. A. 238, 239.

On which a Scholiast thus comments, Οἵτινες τὰς δίκας καὶ τοὺς νόμους παραλαβόντες φυλάττουσιν. We may also, go to the forum or council chamber of heathen states for instruction on this subject. Men sat there, in deliberation, in the midst of altars and deities, and indeed, in one republic, tho enacting authority, though the most ungovernable, and the most ambitious in the world, did not venture on any law, but under the impression, that the Gods had previously consented to it.

Let the Christian reader now look back on the preceding notes, and learn out of heathen story, that a polity is almost a church. From the whole of our argument indeed, it appears, to be strictly, a church with the addition of power or force, sufficient for obedience, tranquillity and safety: it is a flock, belonging to God, fed with bread from heaven, and gathered and at repose under a sheltering, overshadowing canopy. If the Christian reader be a man, who has slandered, or aimed a blow at the ecclesiastical part of the state of England, let him now mourn his folly, his ignorance and his guilt. Let him no more excuse his fault by a mistaken respect for the civil part.

can only deliver from a temporal curse, and can only bestow a temporal blessing. The priest is here more honourable, than the magistrate; and in the view of this distinction, the brother less in power shall often have precedency of the brother, who is his head and governor. On this ground, the magistrate shall himself listen to the instructions of the priest, and be reproved by him. On this ground the priest shall always be in council with the magistrate, not only to awe down strife, and make the assembly venerable, but chiefly, to give advice and interpretation. Nor shall he, who teaches the higher part of virtue, be debarred from enforcing the lower; the priest may be also, a magistrate, a noble, or a king. In the view of this distinction, the interpretations of Scripture given by the priest, shall be a chapter in the code. On this ground, the creeds of synods and the canons of councils shall be hung up with the regulations of commerce, and be at the head of the tablet. On this principle, the King shall be anointed by the priest, before he mounts the throne. On this principle, the son of the King shall sit, as a pupil, at the feet of the priest, and the church shall ever be named before the King.

In the next inference, which we offer, we mean, if possible, to fix on the error, which some Christians have embraced, a reproof and a refutation, the shame of which is not to be removed, but by repentance. The inference is this; that the alliance between the priesthood and the magistracy, the church and the state, is not an union of two persons, which they formed on their own choice, from motives of their own, and can dissolve at pleasure. They are

not two societies but one ; they are one holy, indissoluble incorporation, acting under the same charter received from the same founder and institutor, and for the same ends. The division of their employment is not a separation of the persons ; it is only a division of labour, for accommodation, for decorum, for seemliness, for ease, for dispatch, for greater skill, ornament, and energy. The alliance between the church and the state, wherever it remains, is a continuation of that one individual person, in whom the priesthood and the government were originally vested. It is a certain fact, that in the first ages of the world, the knife and the sceptre were in the same hands. The father, the patriarch, the king was the sacrificer and the lawgiver of his family, and unto this day, in this alliance, is his venerable form exhibited to us.

He is venerable for his hoar hairs. He is venerable for his wisdom. He is venerable, as having the double seal of God upon his forehead. He is venerable for his clothing, which is white and crimson, the robe of mercy and the robe of terror. He has never, till our day, been struck at or mangled.

Christians have done, what heathens never did. Till our day, there has been no great break in this alliance, or in the succession of the allied pair. The heathens never tore them asunder*.

* It may be worth remarking here what when Heathenism was rejected, and Christianity adopted into the Roman state under Constantine, and his successors, the latter was not adopted, as a true religion superseding a false, but on the same principle, that the Jewish economy was thrust out and superseded by the Christian. The economy, the heathens were under, was in its original and interior construction, as sound, as the Jewish ; it was the patriarchal, Mesopotamian, or ancient Hebrew economy, having a code of like moral laws with the Mosaic, and having rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices, corresponding in leading points to those, and looking equally forward to Him, in whom the ritual and moral school was to appear with greater grace

In one state, newly erected, the founders have, avowing another principle, and denying the original charter, made a wide breach. They have not indeed, entirely disowned the priest, but they nurture him not; they give him not sufficient bread nor

and beauty, in whom all shadows and types were to disappear. The difference between the two economies, if we may call them two, lay chiefly in this, that the one was more secured against corruption and degeneracy, than the other*. At our Saviour's coming they were both greatly corrupted. But at that time, what was true in both lost its preeminence or came to its accomplishment and end, and of necessity, with the true fell, what was corrupt or false in both. The form and influence indeed of both remained for some time after the Saviour's advent. They both gave way reluctantly to that, in which they were, as dispensations, fulfilled, absorbed or destroyed. Nor was their full removal and downfall brought about, but by the power of the state, in the one case, by fire and sword, in the other, by the frowns and penalties of the government.

Let all Christians consider, what they are doing, when they renounce, or keep a suspicious silence on the prophecy, that the church is *to suck the breast of kings*†. Let them consider, that, if the Roman power crucified the Redeemer, it still kept the records and the ritual relating to his honour, that, if it persecuted the church, it still extirpated its enemies. Let them consider its brutishness and ignorance. All power, at the best, has much of the brute in its energies. Nor did it at first know its true, legitimate brother. He was born in the latter days, in the decrepitude of the world. It often, too, hated his loud chiding against the harlot, which had long occupied its ear and bosom. It often feared and distrusted his intentions. It gave him blows, to shew its pique and suspicion, and to prove him. When it knew him, it took him.‡ When it could believe in him, it joined its banners to his. By a voluntary and distinct movement, if we may venture so to conceive and say, it placed itself, where it is seen in the Apocalypse with its rival and fellow beasts, beneath the throne of the Lamb.§ It spread its eagle wings for the Lamb to ride on.

On the interpretation, here hinted at, and which, if true, is most important, we observe, that the four empires, spoken of in prophecy, are all still in being. The great and leading difference between them, is, that the Roman is still, as was foretold, the dominant power.‖ The broken limbs of this power, which are European and American states, have still the Roman lineaments, have still the ensign and the spirit of the eagle. The broken limbs of the other three, which lie chiefly in Africa and Asia, are more disjointed and scattered, and consequently are more passive under the influence and encroachments of their conqueror fellow, and are, as was foretold, alive only.¶ But they have all, four, hitherto borne up, and are still to bear up, unto the end, the throne of God and the Lamb.

* Rom. iii. 2. † Isaiah lx. 16. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 8. § Rev. iv. Ezek. i.

‖ Daniel ii. vii. 7, 11, 12. Sir Isaac Newton's Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel, p. 31, 118, &c.

¶ Daniel vii. 12. Sir Isaac Newton. ibid.

adequate protection; they give him neither the honour nor the portion, which God assigned his Levite, where there was less of both to give.* In this country every sheaf of the field is unhallowed. In this state the priest is single and solitary, cast on the caprice of the populace, always unprincipled, thrown, as a prey, upon the net of evil men in power, left to cope with the shifts and grin of triumphant fraud, with the earthy spirit of agriculture, with the base heart of the man of commerce, who usually, sees no value in any thing, which he cannot poise in his hands to feel the weight of. They have chosen the meaner, lower part of wisdom, to produce order, tranquillity, and obedience by; they have laid aside the soothing moral preamble of statutes, which must ever be rigid. They will not use the voice, which persuades to repentance, which alarms shameless vices, which shakes the hearts of the tens of thousands of sinners, for whom there is no name in law. They have preferred force and terror to rule by, so as nearly to shut out all holy love, gracious condescension, pity heaven born. In their calendar they have no saint for a pattern; they commemorate only the stern, yet ambiguous virtue of the patriot. They never devised but one honorary order in the state, an order of men of blood.

They have reason to be frightened with their deed. If the call to repentance by the priest be not authorized in the state, there will be other calls; if the voice of the priest be not encouraged to speak, there will a voice be heard, which will make every ear

* The calculation of the revenue assigned to the priesthood *under the law*, is stated in Hooker's Eccl. Polity. B. VII. s. 23.

tingle. If men will not repent by the word of the priest, by the milder means, they will be chastised into repentance. Almighty God keeps in reserve, and at his own special disposal, for kingdoms and states, three calamities, pestilence, famine and the sword, and, if they will not have the priest, he will visit by these. And, already has more than one report of pestilence come from the country, we advert to; already are sure predictions heard of intestine discord and war.

That Christians should patronize or reduce to practice this malignant error, may be a matter of surprise; that atheists or infidels should do so, can be none. In another country nearer to our's, we have seen this alliance entirely dissolved. The revolutionary governors there, when they pulled down the throne, pulled down the altar, and in the end dug up this last from its very foundations. They murdered every priest or sent him into an exile, from which there was no return. They did not leave a man in any corner of the state, who taught by profession any legal or moral maxim. The state became a huge, gigantic body, as indeed, it was before, but now without bandage, without dress, making bare in the presence of all the world, without shame and without blush, all the terrific movements of its muscles.

The governors were brought into this dreadful dilemma. Their folly, as well as their cruelty brought them into it. They had no hope of reward left, which they could hold out to their subjects, either present, or to come. They could not shew, they loved their own species; they had given every proof to the contrary. They had no habiliments of

state left to appear in, but the blood red garment and death's black bonnet. They had not a soothing speech to make, either to widow or to orphan; they had no sentence to utter, but the brief sentence of death. There was no alternative, but either to lay down their power, or govern by terror. They chose terror. They chose to govern in no better character, than that of the executioner or keeper of the prison, a character, which in all other countries is in no estimation with the dregs of the people. They were contented to sink into the lowest and most degraded officers of a state, the turbaned mute, who carries the bow string, and the goaler with the chain and key. They were even on this score, justly frightful to all mankind.

It is some consolation amidst the calamities, which these governors have inflicted on the world; it is some triumph to the Christian cause, that atheism, in rule, has been thus, by its own act, degraded and made frightful; that infidels in that point, in which they professed to be most wise, have proved themselves to be more ignorant, more senseless and brutish, than the ancient worshippers of stocks and stones.

The present usurper seems to discern the error, and, in the spirit of a hypocrite, is trying to sneak back into estimation with men and favour with God. He has not repented; he has never as yet, smitten his breast, but in the disappointment of carnage or ambition. He will probably not nurture the priest; he will not restore him his ancient bread; he will probably not give him, even the pay of a Janissary. He is to be one of his body guard, but probably in the meanest station, in the outer court, where the

poorest and the vilest come for the bread thrown out.

The last inference, we offer, is connected with the meditation, this day is to awaken in our minds, and it is this; that, if in the same incorporated society one part is, for their ministry and labour, entitled to a recompence from the state, the other is, in all reason, entitled to a like recompence for their's; if in the division of their joint and common employment, the one is paid for a meaner service, for force, for drudgery, the other is surely to be paid for a nobler and better occupation.

Whether, in the first ages of the world, there was a primary revelation, in which Almighty God commanded to be reserved unto himself, out of all property whatsoever, a certain, determinate portion or share, we cannot now enquire. Neither can we now enquire, whether there was, at that period also, a primary revelation, in which Almighty God made known, that, of this share reserved unto himself, he returned back again to the priesthood, either the whole or part, for honour and maintenance, and by this gift reached with his own hands out his own store, liberated his servants from all obligation to men, and fenced their revenue with a double fence. It is probable, there were such original revelations; yet, on this subject, we need only appeal to the comparison between the two employments of the priest and the magistrate, and to the sense of shame in the bosom of the latter.

If the magistrate, who has the power of enacting, enact all the tribute of the state for himself alone, is there no grudging selfishness, no avarice in this? Is not this the avarice, which is no policy? If he

take advantage of the meekness and modesty of his partner, of his innocence of manners, of his silence under wrong, of his love of peace, to give him no share in the patrimony, is there in this no barbarity? If he cast out his brother, born of God with himself, to a precarious subsistence, the lot of the beasts of the wood, and the fowls of heaven, is not this an oppression, of which no heathen spoiler was ever guilty? If the cry of the poor, which has been dignified with the title of *sacred*, though it has no proper claim to such a title, ascend to heaven, shall not the affliction of the beggared priest hasten thither on wings, and bring down vengeance on the government?

In the comparison of the two employments, we look on the magistrate, and see the image and representative of the divine terrors, we look on the priest and see the image and representative of the divine love and mercy. The priest is the *ambassador for Christ, in Christ's stead**. The judge and the senator have wisdom and eloquence, a large share; but the priest has wisdom and eloquence too, wisdom, which knows the deep things of God, and eloquence to tell the deeds and sufferings of his Saviour. The king has compassion to forgive and free from prison, but there is a pity in the priest, which heals the broken hearted, which pours balm on wounds, which liberates the captive soul, and absolves the penitent. The king and the judge have in their train the implements of death and the ministers of blood, but the priest has no such in his train. His train are virgins, pure, spotless, heaven born, faith, hope,

* 2 Cor. v. 20.

charity, joy, peace, patience, meekness, temperance, chastity.

It becomes evident, that, if terror is to be paid for, mercy also ought; if the public owe tribute for words and symbols of judgment, they owe it too, for words and symbols of peace and heavenly compassion; if wages be due to him, who sweeps the prison, or stands by the accursed tree of death, they are surely due to him, whose station is next *the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of nations.**

England has understood this argument. She has felt it. She has been kind to her priests. She has intended more for them, than they now enjoy. She has given them the tenth of her produce. If it were not the gift of God, originally assigned and received from him, which it probably, is, she has made it his gift, in making it the gift of the state. And she has stuck upon it the laurel bough, to mark it out to the beholder as the glory, as the sanctification and benediction of her soil.

The benefactors, we commemorate this day, understood this argument. They have given, not in useless, lavish charity, but in wise benevolence. They have thought, and justly thought, that money could be as well expended on the temple of God, as on the prison, which is to hold the malefactor, on the school room of science, as on the dome of a palace, in preparing the chest for meditation's volumes, as in building a rampart or an arsenal, in giving the scholar his pension and his meal, as in providing a bed for the sick. They have thought, that earthly treasure was well given for salvation, though not their own, but another's, in return, for

* Rev. xxii. 2.

the sick man's hope, better than medicine, and for the exhortation in the prison. Their bequests are not indeed, to put in motion the loom and the plough, the two state blessings of the Atheists' commonwealth, but they are for contemplation, for philosophy, for faith, for penitence, for the prayers of the saints, for blessings, which descend from heaven out of regard to their prayers, secretly indeed, as the dew of the night, but seen, like the dew in the morning, to have watered and refreshed a fainting world.

Let it be no more said, that our bread has been given us in folly or mistake. Let it be no more grudged to us. Let the ancient maxims, we seem to have lost by an infidel philosophy, which kisses her hand to the earth, by a presumptuous humanity, which contrasts her civic crown with the glory round the head of Christ and his saints, by a misjudging benevolence, which measures the advancement of the public good by animal activity, too often vain and puffing, always the meanest, and certainly not the accepted effort of man; let the ancient maxims be revived amongst us. Let all men now again consider, that leisure is learning's nurse. Let all men now again recollect, that contemplation, though never known but by the eye, that the secret aspirations of devotion, the immanent, unseen act of faith, the dovelike mind and look, are above the price of rubies, are ten thousand times the ransom of a captive or a slave. Let all men never again forget, that the mind is beyond all calculation, more deserving of our charity, than the body. Let the voice of wisdom, which for a season, seems to have been deafened by the burst of bubbles, and by the

crash of falling states, be again listened to; of wisdom, who was from everlasting, and assisted in building the pillars of the world, who says, that *by her*, by her will and appointment, by her golden book spread out and expounded, by her endowments and graces, by her grace, the grace of God, *Kings reign and Princes decree justice.*

XXIV.

THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS AND INSTRUCTION.

[Preached before the University of Cambridge, on May 15, 1803]

ST. MARK X. 14.

Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

THE portion of Scripture, to which the text belongs, is read by the Church in the ministration of public baptism of infants. It is read there, not so much as a proof of the right, which children have to be baptized, as to shew, that the formalities of ceremony, when bestowed on them, are not lost or wasted, that children are capable of deriving benefit from the embrace of mercy and pity, that the hand of blessing may be put on their heads, and the word of blessing spoken over them. *He took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.*

There are indeed, who not reading, as the Church, have invented a prohibition excluding infants from baptism. They have done it, perhaps, in ignorance, and certainly not in humanity. We suppose, it is done in ignorance, because it seems not to be considered, that the ecclesiastical or ceremonial pat-

tern set forth in Scripture for our imitation, is a pattern chiefly consisting, like the doctrine and moral of Scripture, in generals, not in particulars; that sympathies, consciousnesses and associations, much promoted by all solemn, and particularly by all initiatory rites, are things of incalculable influence on the happiness and misery, on the vices and virtues of men; that they contribute more to happiness, than any other natural means whatsoever, more to misery, than any other natural instruments, which give pain or wounds, more to vice than any seduction or temptation, more to virtue than perhaps, instruction taken by itself, or perhaps, taken by itself, than the very agency of the Holy Ghost. Is it not found by experience, that to have been admitted into the bosom of the Church in our most helpless years shall be felt, as a tie knitting the heart to the Church, to duty, to God, to our neighbour having the same sign on his forehead? Has it not fallen under observation, that this adoption shall oft check, even a child's folly, and more oft the desperate plunge of youthful wickedness? Is it not to be remarked, that the secret remembrance of the baptismal vow shall oft soothe down the secret enmity and rebellion of a sinner, that certain consciousnesses shall incline him to venerate the rebuke of the Church or her minister, and melt him to approve the law, by which he is condemned?

These are things scarce capable of exact representation. They are consciousnesses and sympathies, which bind themselves, it cannot with exactness be told how, round our very frame and constitution, and make a part of the temper. They are circumstances and events, which are not seen,

yet they certainly happen to us. And by them it is, that the blessing of our baptism very much comes down upon us. It is by them, that the water sprinkled on our foreheads is not all spilled; that we are kept at a greater distance from Satan and the world, than we otherwise should be, and are brought nearer unto God. We are not, perhaps, drawn so nigh to him, as we ought. Are we so nigh to heaven, as we ought to be? Let us look within and without; within, on the treachery and apostacy of our hearts; without, on the pomps and vanities, we follow and admire. What is the cause, that the whole of the baptismal blessing is not our's? Why is it, that the sprinkling by water has not proved to us the baptism, of which it is the emblem, the baptism of the Holy Ghost?

We have said, that the prohibition excluding infants from baptism has sprung from a want of humanity.—We say this, because it exhibits the Church to the world, as a forbidding, stern and stately matron, rigid in the choice of her attendants, and expecting fruit, where culture has been denied. It does not exhibit the Church in the character, she ought to be seen in, as a nursing mother, who feels pangs for her sons and daughters, and whose eye is, for the most part, on her youngest. It is a prohibition, which in some sense, turns the babe adrift, which leaves it to the chances of another's humanity, to other teachers not always fit to teach, to other parents not always loving their own offspring. It is a prohibition, which, as it casts the babe forth, puts on its forehead the brand of infidel, and never receives it back, but with the reproach literally expressed and understood, of having been an out-

cast. The child is more indebted to the bonds of civil society, than to the bonds of Christian fellowship; it owes more of its virtue to the magistrate, than to the priest, more to the penal laws of government, than to the yoke of the Gospel, than to the pity, embrace and promise of Jesus Christ by his ministers.

This is an inhumanity followed by the usual effects of systematized inhumanity. It communicates its own hardness to those, who are exposed to it. It hardens the hearts of those, who are born to so severe a rebuke, to so cruel a rejection.

But we are not of this school. We have attended to the pattern set us by the Saviour, and have understood it in its right sense. We have considered, that the condescension he shewed on earth, is not lessened, but increased by his exaltation to heaven. Amongst other rewards of his obedience and death, he has now, in his exaltation, received grace to give to men more freely and more plenteously, than he could bestow on the children, he took up in his arms. They could not then receive, what ours now can. That his blessing and condescension are now mercy, flowing down in a fuller stream for the cleansing of impurity and the washing away of sin, than in the Saviour's own day. Redemption had not then reached its highest splendour. We have now greater encouragement to bring our babes unto Christ. There is now more grace, more understanding, more forgiveness and virtue to be attained for them, than at that time.

So far we speak on the case of the baptism of infants, on that first approach, which they, who have no voice to use in prayer, can still make to

their God and Saviour. After the example of the Church we apply the text to this argument, and it appears from the considerations, we offer, and which certainly have no slight reference to the welfare of the individual and of society, that baptism is, after this manner, a pledge of future advantages, that the font of the Church is, in some sort, perhaps to all, who partake of it, the laver of regeneration. Strictly speaking, indeed, the sacrament of baptism is only an emblem of an invisible grace; nothing more; and therefore cannot, as such, be a moving cause or a necessary source of that grace. But here we close the first topic, we intended, adding only, in brief, that, though this sacrament be but an emblem, yet in the contemplation of its utility, even according to our imperfect statement, we may listen with complacency to the Fathers and other expositors, who use a language on this subject, which will not bear the exact and rigid rule of argument, or the less exact canon of criticism, a language suggested, perhaps, by ancient usage in the Jewish or Heathen ritual, by zeal for the interests and reputation of the Christian, by prejudice in favour of an attractive and impressive ordinance, by tenderness or by charitable hope, or by the less laudable motive to give to the convert a mystical badge of distinction, or to the rite the strong imposing colour of a mystical initiation.

If we are inclined to believe, that an early impression, though not perceived at the time, can in the years, which follow, and in the exercise of the senses, shew the hold, it has got, can gain on the heart, and contribute to its regeneration, how much greater must our conviction be concerning the

benefit of the other means, which are afterwards to draw our children more distinctly and still closer to their Saviour. If the wearing of a badge, if the sign of the cross, if the Christian name bestowed in the solemnity of a sacrament be monitory or consolatory, if it tend to produce virtues Christian or Christian-like, if it inspire fears, attachments and hopes, how much ought we to encourage the lessons, observances and habits, which are to kindle in our children, when thought and speech come, lively and just apprehensions concerning the cross itself.

On the subject of instruction indeed, little can be said, which is, strictly speaking, new. Almost all are become sensible of the need and value of instruction. Even a child can be convinced of the benefits, which are to flow from learning, and will acquiesce in its discipline. Yet, though this be the case, no harm can attend the repetition of an old topic. And perhaps, he that gives a Bible to a poor man may hence perceive, that he has done better, than by a pecuniary gift, and he who builds a school or a church, than he who provides for the lame and the blind. Our thoughts on this subject flow in this order.

1. It was by instruction, that mankind were at first preserved above the level of their fellow animals, and it is still by instruction, that they are kept from sinking down to that level. Mankind indeed, possess faculties and capacities superior to the other living creatures of the earth, they have a frame and organs better adapted to receive and retain learning, to use it and turn it to advantage; but, denied this instruction, the capacity, faculty

and organ would be of no avail. If there were not instruction by a teacher, there would be nothing left to impress and inform the mind, but the objects of nature around us, and there is good reason to believe, that these could only affect us, as they do other animals, could only teach us to seek the same things, they do, the gratification of the appetite, rest, warmth and sleep. The impression and information could be different in degree only, not in kind; the superior faculty of receiving it would awaken a superior skill, but would direct to no other pursuits, than those followed by the rival brute, we should meet in the woods and mountains.

The Scripture has recorded, that *man is born like a wild ass's colt*.* And, if we were even to wave the authority of this language, we should still maintain, that our sentiment is agreeable to the natural and moral history of man, and to the justest and soundest philosophy.

2. It was to instruction in religion, that all other science and art are indebted for their origin and improvements, that nearly all our social intercourse, conveniences and comforts owe their establishment and perfection. If, as we have seen, instruction, taken generally, be the nurse of man's reason, that particular species of it, which makes him thoughtful and contemplative, must, first of all things, have sharpened his genius and invention. If instruction in religion preceded all other, which it certainly did, Almighty God being himself, in person, the first teacher, and religion the first teaching, to the influence, this would have on the human character, feelings and temper, must fairly be ascribed that

* Job xi. 12

attention to the duties of life, to labour, to the means of livelihood, to family, to wife, to children and kinsmen, which bring out art, science and skill; to this influence must be ascribed that love of the species, that benevolence, which would supersede or stimulate self-love, and would toil for the good and comfort of others. Religion rightly understood and enjoyed is the sure patron and friend of all true science, taste and improvements. It was almost the inventress. It was this, we may venture to say, which had much to do in the congregating of men into communities, in bringing them from the wandering and savage life to that, which is less their choice, the permanent and tranquil abode. It was this, which built houses and cities. It was this, which made man a scholar and an artificer. From the beginning of the world, it has been, in every nation, the foundress of the college and the school.

Let us pause here to estimate the price to be set upon instruction in religion. Let us recollect that beautiful Scripture sentiment. *The merchandize of wisdom is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.** It has, in a sense, brought both out of the mine; it has in a sense, taught the use of both for ornament and convenience, and certainly has taught their right moral enjoyment.

3. What was suggested in the outset of these remarks on instruction now leads to another reflection, that without a teacher there could be no knowledge of God, of his being or perfections, of his laws or of his gospel. Of the doctrines of the gospel, and of some parts of the divine law, there

* Proverbs iii. 14.

is no question. These came by revelation, which is itself, instruction, the teaching of God from heaven by speech adapted to man's speech, by the word spoken and written. This all allow.

Concerning the being and perfections of God, and concerning the plainer, we should say, perhaps, the seemingly plainer part of his laws, how we do, or may learn them, there is and has been much discussion. We before intimated, that, if the objects of nature around us were our only teachers, they could inspire sentiments and feelings, differing in degree only, not in kind, from those of other animals, and could direct only to similar actions and pursuits. In addition to this intimation, we now ask, what images or representations, but of themselves, or their like, could the objects around us communicate, what ideas could pass to the mind through the senses, the only avenues, but such, as correspond to the bodies without, and to them alone? Can the eye by looking see God, who is a spirit? Can the touch learn from the things, which touch, that they have an invisible former and mover, who is immaterial? Is the soft touch of the ambient air, or the still softer touch of light, any other, than the touch of matter? Can the ear make out God to be the utterer of any sound, if it be not, after the fashion of the human voice, articulate, the sound of speech, the distinct pronunciation, for instance, of the name, *I am*? Is the beat of sound on the ear any thing else, than the hit of matter? Man is, if we may be forgiven the language, in matter's prison, in the hold and case up to the crown of his head from the sole of his foot resting on the earth. His frame, shorter than the bounds

of the inclosure, is inclosed in it. It is the element, he moves up and down in.*

A writer of eminence, to whose authority we all bow, after giving a plausible representation of a supposable impression, as to the being of God, from the mechanism in nature, sums up the account after this sort, that contrivance proves a contriver, design a designer†. It is probable, there was no intention to mislead, but, as a mistake may happen, it may be proper to remark, that in the subject of these propositions, the same indeed, in both, contrivance, and design, there is presupposed the contemplation of the end, the purpose, the mind, the intelligence of a contriver, and consequently, his existence. The propositions ought to mean no more, than that contrivance proves the skill of a contriver, design the wisdom of a designer‡.

* Two corollaries deducible from this argument are, perhaps, worth the reader's attention: 1st, That, what are called the five senses, are, in fact, but one. 2dly, That by this alone, which is named the touch, all sympathy, all knowledge, all spiritual blessing comes to the soul of man.

† Natural Theology; or, Evidences of the *Existence* and Attributes of the Deity, collected from the appearances of Nature, by W. Paley, D. D. London, 1802.

‡ Contrivance is the composition, adjustment, adaptation, combination, or relation to each other, of the parts and properties of matter for one or more certain ends, as for instance, the contrivance in a stone found on a heath is a composition or relation to each other of parts of matter of an adhesive quality, of parts, adhesive, in this case, in close contact, or, as it were, in a single bunch, for one or more certain ends, to be at some time or other, perhaps, a stepping stone in a brook, a stone in a building to resist the beat of the rain or wind, or in the place, where it lies, a shelter for a worm or a beetle, or, (to speak more gravely) taking its place and rank in the row of beings, though the lowest, to display, in points soon to be adverted to, in connexion with other parts of creation, with other masses of varied matter, the power and skill of the Maker of all.

A poet, speaking in the person of a Duke, who was driven into exile, and lived in a forest, "finds sermons in stones," but a philosopher, in the very opening of his work, writes thus, "In crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a *stone*, and were asked how the stone came to be there, *I might possibly answer, that for any thing I knew to the contrary, it had lain there for ever: nor would it, perhaps, be very easy to shew the absurdity of*

But we hint only at this point of debate, though we think, that, in these hints, is comprised the

this answer." The philosopher, perhaps, retained the association, which seemed to weaken the evidence of power and skill, the association arising from stones being very common and cheap, and from their appearing to lie at waste. The poet, in the true spirit of genius and refinement, lets this association go. The poet, perhaps, had taken up the stone, and remarked the weight, hardness, close texture, and chequered variety of the parts; perhaps, he had broken the stone and found streaks of colours, that might have been taken from the tulip or the rainbow. The philosopher had omitted to do this. The poet perhaps, acting to the appointments of Providence, and following the feelings, his nature had acquired, brought only to his aid the recollections, he had gathered in the school of instruction and of life. The philosopher brings to his said surprize, though this were rather the poet's province; he finds a watch on a heath with *parts framed and put together for a purpose* (Nat. Theol. C. 1. p. 2) with parts arranged and movements adapted *to one result* (Rev. Robert Hall, Baptist Minister's Sermon, p. 6. Cambridge, 1800.) and he endeavours for a while to set at a distance from him all, he had heard or seen, before he crossed the heath, of God's or man's ingenuity.

The conclusion of the Stoic philosopher is from the same premises more accurate, than Dr. Paley's. "Si meliora sunt ea, quæ natura, quam illa, quæ arte perfecta sunt: nec ars effecit quicquam sine ratione; ne natura quidem rationis expers est habenda. Cic. de Nat. Deor. L. II. 34.

Let it not be thought out of place, if we add here, that in Mr. Locke's argument for the existence of God the conclusion ought to be the same with that in the preceding quotation from Cicero, and with that in the quotation he himself makes, and the meaning of which he has mistaken. "Quid est enim verius, quam neminem esse oportere tam stulte arrogantem, ut in se mentem et rationem putet inesse, in cœlo mundoque non putet? Aut ea, quæ vix summa ingenii ratione comprehendat, nulla ratione moveri putet? Cic. de Leg. L. II." See Locke's Essay concerning Human Understanding, Vol. 2. B 4. C. 10.

Nor let it be thought out of place, if we add here the following assertion. "I do not know," says Ellis, "one passage in Scripture, which intimates, that God intended his works, as the means, whereby men were to come to a knowledge of his existence." See Ellis's Knowledge of divine things from Revelation, not from Reason or Nature. Vol. I. p. 361. ed. 2. London, 1771.

Nor let it be thought out of place, if we propose here a canon of criticism, that, as thoughts and words are the same, excepting that they are not formed on the same organs, nor reach equally the eye and ear of the looker and listener, a loose popular style, which is a combination of loose popular thoughts or words, will almost always mislead in the discussion of first principles, almost always difficult and remote, almost always lying at the bottom of truth's fountain. Near the top of that fountain are sparkles and bubbles, and the current, which flows down from it, is winding and babbling and violent and muddy.

It was unfortunate for Dr. Paley, that he should pitch his foot against this stone. Let it only be said, that perhaps, he stumbled, or that it was not the

overthrow or refutation of the arguments commonly called the arguments a priori and a posteriori, and we add, that, if the being of God is not known but by the speech of a teacher, his attributes and law can, of course, be disclosed only by the same medium. We turn from this point and take up knowledge, which, all admit, can only so come. How, but by testimony, shall we know, that a Saviour was born into the world, how know, that he lived and died in circumstances different from all other men, and such, as surpass all natural understanding and comprehension, but by instruction, either at the mouth or in the book, which is also the speech, of a teacher? The Gospels are a history of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ; they are a record of these facts, as well as of doctrine or precept; and how shall these reach us, but either from the original witnesses or a line of witnesses succeeding to their chair and authority? How shall we apprehend, but in this way, that the God of heaven is one God subsisting in three persons, co-equal and co-eternal, the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost; how apprehend, that they have distinct offices, to call, to redeem, to sanctify? That the sin of the first parents of mankind is imputed to all their offspring, that there is a never failing, never ceasing tendency to sin in all born into the world, that there is no remission of sin but by the shedding of blood, that one man's sufferings and death were the atonement, that justification is by the imputation of another's righteousness, that

philosopher's stone. Let no bad omen be drawn from hence. His work proves the workman, and in the perusal of it the hand and workmanship of God may be admired and adored.

salvation is by faith in this atonement and this righteousness, not in any other sufferings or deeds considered, as expiatory or righteous, how shall these reach our intellect or our bosom, but by the eye reading, or the ear hearing? It is well said, the saying has an emphatical reference to this topic, that *faith cometh by hearing.** That faith, which imparts an evidence to the things, we see not and understand not, and a substance to the things, the expectation of which seldom passes beyond the hope, that faith comes by the ear.†

4. Let us now take instruction in a more extensive sense, than has already been assigned; let it comprise discipline as well as learning, the prize of reward, the rod and frown, as well as the lesson; and taken in this sense, the benefit of it will still more engage our attention. In this case, the passions are awakened to their best uses, a dignity is impressed on the lesson, and a splendour thrown around it, an awe and a beauty are upon it, all conspiring to rivet on the memory, the meaning, the story, the moral. It is true, that silent observation on the passing scenes of life is one of man's instructors; he learns much from the bustle and rubs of the world. His wants and interests are also his teachers. But it is that, in whose praise we speak, it is instruction, in this extensive sense,

* Rom. x. 17.

† As the circulation of knowledge, before the invention of printing, depended much more than it now does, on oral instruction, the language of the Apostle is to be associated with that circumstance of his age. Hearing was then the scholar's or the Christian's principal advantage, and the zeal of the philosopher or preacher was best shewn by travelling from city to city. It may at this day, with propriety be said, that faith comes by the eye, as well as by the ear, by reading as well as by hearing, and that, if the claim of the writer to promote the welfare of mankind were ever despised, it shall not now be so by either the itinerant or stationary teacher.

which is to awaken the thoughts, in which human events are to revolve; it is this, which is to bring our experience to maturity, that it may be in time for use, before our days are gone. It is the early hope of smiles or reward, which, with the lesson, is to kindle the sense of interest or want; it is the early fear of punishment, of the loss of honour, which, with the lesson, is to reveal, in proper season, the difference between the good and evil, the honourable and dishonourable, ever rising up to choice in the intercourse of society. It is this instruction, which trains up a child in the way, he is to go.

5. If we continue our use of this word in the same sense, we may yet adopt a higher strain of praise. It lends a comment to the text; it explains the meaning of the word *such*. It is this, which teaches children to discern between the true and false promise of happiness, between the advice of a parent and the advice of a stranger, between the appearances of virtue and the reality, between seduction and lawful enjoyments, between temptation and lawful incitements. It has taught them to esteem the will of a superior a rule of conduct. It has taught them to honour his will, when not in sight, to hate what he hates, and love what he approves. It is this, which keeps them in innocency, this, which makes them, when they are old, not to depart from the way, they have been trained in.

Let us contemplate its use in those two seasons, which are big with peril to men, the days of adversity and prosperity. It is this, which diminishes the danger of riches, which clothes the noble

and the great with modesty. It is this, which disposes the wealthy not to spurn the poor, which gathers both together to worship in the same temple and kneel at the same altar, which inclines the proud and the gay to submit to that hour of restraint and humiliation, when all are on a level in the presence of God the Lord of all, the common Father, the common Saviour, then making no distinction, unless it be perhaps,—we speak this without irreverence for the rich, but still as a solemn warning, then making no distinction,—unless it be perhaps, in favour of the poor.

It is this, which gives to adversity a softening power. The child has been accustomed to yield to correction; he will also yield to the rod of God. He has been accustomed to bow to man; he will also bow to God. For his faults he has heard upbraidings; he will be inclined to upbraid himself. There will be a time perhaps, when he will smite his bosom for folly and for sin. And then is his regeneration come.

To conclude; if instruction be indeed that, which raises the human character above the brute, which gives a dignity and grace to the dominion, man by right, by the express will of God, possesses over the other creation; if instruction in religion be a main source of those things, which civilize and decorate society, of those things, which are called beautiful and praiseworthy; if instruction be the only means, by which we believe, God is, or understand his perfections and laws; if it break the seal of the Gospel book, explain and vindicate its contents; if it be the root of all the hope of heaven for sinful man, of all the faith, which delivers from the curse

of hell, which sustains our fainting spirits, and, a we sicken and die, gives to the bitterness of sickness and death, sweet alleviation, resignation and patience; if it be the lamp lighting the path-way, distinguishing and marking good and evil, disposing to the choice of honest poverty before guilty wealth, amidst the chances and wrongs of life keeping the mind erect and the foot firm, if it be the root of all innocency and goodness, the nurse, cherisher and ripener of all virtue; if it be indeed the fountain communicating such blessings, let us of this place be greatly solicitous, that our children should come to this fountain, drink of it and live for ever. In the contemplation of this subject there can be no room for any emotion of envy or malignity; there can be room only for the benevolent affections, for the love of man founded on the love of God: we cannot wish to bar the young from the endowments, which are to increase their own comfort, and the order, arts and wealth of their country.

Let us remember the fellowship between us and them in our common nature. Let us revere the baptismal grace, which is upon them, and, as our own distinction, foster and cherish it unto ripeness. Let us not suffer it to perish, to go to waste, to become vile. Let us lead our children onwards unto the Saviour, who is waiting for their coming, who will impart a double blessing, not that by water only, but that also, which is by the Holy Ghost.

Let us too, of this place, renounce and resist that error, which taints the benevolent sentiments of the present age, the error of preferring the body to the mind. In many parts of the King's dominions the

cry for instruction is louder than the cry of poverty in any, yet while this cry gains little on our ear, a theory of medicine of ambiguous or no utility shall be allowed a claim on the public feeling: the not innocent debtor shall occupy the thoughts and move the compassion of the great and powerful, while this harvest at home and abroad, standing thick, is drooping for want of the sun and the shower.

XXV.

THE PRECEPT OF MUTUAL LOVE.

[A Spital Sermon, Preached at Christ Church, upon Easter Tuesday, 1816, and dedicated to the Right Honorable Matthew Wood, Esq. Lord Mayor of London, before whom it was preached.]

1 PETER iii. 8.

Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.

If at any time obedience to the will of God become a topic for our thoughts, the consideration of the reasons of our obedience will generally, doubtless, make a part of that topic. Our natural unwillingness to obey will almost of itself bring this part forward to our view; not to mention our love of speculation, or our less innocent curiosity, prying into, and guessing at the motives of him, who commands.

It is not meant to censure the inquiry. The inquiry, if the temper be right, shall always begin and end without harm to the inquirer; and to such a temper the first and plain reason for our obedience to every command of God will always be sufficient. The obedient ear will always hear with acquiescence, that God having adequate authority

is to be obeyed, whatever be the nature and tendency of the commandment.

It has however happened, that Almighty God does not generally press obedience on men, upon the ground only of his authority. He is too wise and too good to use his power after that manner; and it is obvious, of by far the greater part of his commands, especially those which are repeated or added in the New Testament, that they tend to the good of men, of the individual, and of society, to that species of good, which men are apt highly to value, their tranquillity and comfort.

Wherefore, if the precept of the text be a fit topic for our thoughts, let it be allowable to make it of such a sort, as we have said precepts sometimes are made. Let it be allowable to take up the topic of the tendencies of this precept, at the same time not forgetting that these tendencies are the reasons only of wisdom and goodness, not reasons of power; that they do not precede, but follow the reason just before given, the reason of power; that, as they cast a lustre on the power, so they enhance and beautify only obedience; they do not oblige to obedience. Neither let it be an objection, that these tendencies are obvious. If they suit the case and the opportunity, the sermon shall not be despised.

But before we proceed to our subject, it is proper to notice a peculiarity, which attaches to this precept. In the legislative code, it is not once only mentioned, but often. There are precepts, which are but once mentioned; there are also, which are more than once, like this; but of these, which are thus repeated, it is likely on summing up the times

they are mentioned, that this will be found far more frequent than any. We have not summed up the times; for this computation, if you be readers of the Bible, we rely on your recollections; neither would we be understood to speak of the precept, as repeated in terms precisely the same, but as repeated in language in every place meaning the same.

Let this peculiarity be noted, that we may note the importance of the precept. Let us remember, that our Saviour, speaking emphatically, calls it *his* commandment; "This is *my* commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you;" not, because it was his province to give commandments, even, though they were the commandments of love. To do that, was the province of his Father only, the only Fountain of law, and the only Judge. But he calls the commandment of mutual love *his* commandment, because the full disclosure of it, apparently much unknown and little practised, though undoubtedly taught before, was reserved for his time, the time of love, of love proved special and true by his laying down his life for his friends. Let us also remember, that it also is called by the Saviour, the *new* commandment of the Gospel; "A *new* commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you;" not, because it was strictly speaking, *new*, for it had been taught before to the Jew, by Moses, and even to the Heathen, by his philosopher; but because, with that lapse and waste so common to the divine revelations both in Palestine and elsewhere given before the Gospel, it had almost sunk into oblivion; and then, let us remember, that as the *special* and as the *new* commandment so understood, it is in the Gospel brought

oftener into view than any other; and let us inquire, whence could this distinction arise? It was doubtless, because it deserved this distinction.

Man is evidently born in a social state. It is the unavoidable condition of his birth. He has a father who begets, and a mother who bears him. He must be connected with two at least, as the very proximate causes of his being. It is the unavoidable result of his infant helplessness. Almost all other creatures can in their infant state do better for themselves, than man. He must be long nursed and fondled. He must long be carried in the arm. He must long receive milk from his mother's breast, and clothing from his father's labour. He must by long assiduous converse be even taught to speak and know his wants. If his instincts be as strong as in other animals, yet his ability to gratify and supply their demands is not so great. He knows not, as they do, but by long instruction, his poison from his food.

To one then born in such circumstances, to one receiving for so long a time, so many favours, so much help and aid, from his father and mother, from his nurse, and teachers, and friends, is not the rule of conduct good, which prescribes, that he too, is to be kind to them, to think with them, and love them? Where the same roof has long covered, the same fire long warmed, the same table long fed, where all this has happened, in part almost unavoidably, in part even from the very make of our animal frame, how good is the curb provided for selfish spite, for proud malice, for vexatious speech and actions, how golden is the rule which com-

mands the union, the forbearance, the compassions, and courtesies of love.

Are any of you, you, the children of this Hospital, acting an undutiful and stubborn part towards your parents at home? Are you opposing their reasonable wishes, vexing and tormenting them? Or, if free from this blame, are you to be blamed for your behaviour to those here, who are next in place to your parents, and next in honour? Do you throw away in disdain the task given you to learn, or in proud sullenness trample it underfoot, though so plainly, even yourselves being judges, for your good? To be sure, foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; let me however, for once, rebuke that foolishness, and with the same hope, which your governors and teachers have, when they chide, I, though but for once, do hereby rebuke it.

Other reasons for the precept of love now present themselves to us. Let us reflect a little on the corruption of man, what that is. It has a denomination in the Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, of a peculiar sort. It is called by a name, which seems to denote an universal principle, a principle actuating every thing that partakes of flesh; not man only, but every other living, moving creature in the earth. It is called, flesh; and this appears to be that eager, greedy, swelling principle, by which we are all stirred and actuated; that selfish, grasping, arrogant principle, which is mixed up in all men, in the temper and habit of all, and in the actions of all, whether they be personal, social, moral, or religious actions; in the actions of all, whether they be those of nature or of grace.

If then this be so, how necessary is that controul, which is to press down this principle, which is to chain down ambition and vanity; how necessary that power, which is to loosen the gripe of avarice, which is to melt the hard heart of the lover of pleasure, which is to mortify thoughtless appetite, which is to make each of us consult the good, and even the will of another, as well as our own. How necessary the precept for every village, for every town and city, and kingdom and nation.

Amongst the families of every village there is much hate, and jealousy, much strife. Between the aged are envies and heart-burnings; and concerning the young, is it not true, that they are ever rising against the aged, or are ready to rise? The aged, to assist their charities for each other, have the discipline of experience; they have also the commandment; they have also—I was going to say, but perhaps all you, the aged, have it not; consider whether you have—*the faith, which worketh by love;* but concerning the young, is it not true, do not all parents soon know, that the young stand in need of the school, that they may not rise? Is not the school built for love's sake?

In towns and cities indeed, matters are carried to great lengths. In the village there is not work for quarrel and mischief; there is not a crowd large enough to gratify the purposes of ambition and avarice; there is not so much room for vanity to admire itself in, or to seek admirers. In towns and cities there is more lust, more pride, more avarice, more ambition, and more of those, who are ready to do and to abet the doings of lust, pride, avarice and ambition.

Loud had the call to harmony and love need be in those places. Yet, though it has been loud, shall we say, it has been heard?

Doubtless, it has been heard. Christianity was not given in vain. Though much despised, yet she has always had her faithful proselytes; though often rejected, yet she has always been by some approved; though often disregarded, yet even in this tumultuous city has her call been heard; even in this city, is charity to be seen, near at hand, doing that work, which is next after her first, the blessing of an enemy; she is to be seen pitying not the unfortunate only, whom mischance has hurt, and whom she always cherishes; but even those, whose own vices have made the doers miserable.

We do not ask you, though speaking on the precept of love, to look abroad on nations and kingdoms, as if this precept had respect to harmony and love between them. In so doing, we should, we conceive, be giving a sanction to a mistake in morals. In that contemplation, indeed, there may be an use. It opens to us more fully perhaps, than any other example can do, the swelling, greedy, selfish principle, by which man is actuated; it exhibits him out of his borders, fighting, killing, plundering; within, feeding and encouraging hate. It exhibits an animosity, for which there is no curb, but fear; for which there is no direct remedy proposed in the Gospel by any distinct precept, or fair inference from thence; and for which no remedy is to be expected, but in the spread of peaceful sentiments between individuals, in the spread of peaceful sentiments addressed in the Gospel to individuals alone, who, as they increase in numbers, will touch the

more on each other, and will have the greater opportunity of showing, that they have embraced such sentiments.

It is proper enough to advert to the internal state and condition of nations. They are a collection of individuals, whether they be subjects or governors, making up one community and family, and as individuals, so circumstanced, as being bound each to each, and to all, they are held to the observance of this precept. They are justly liable to reproof, if they be not studying harmony and love, if the same good ends be not in their view, if with one mind they seek not the glory of God, if they desire not the alleviation, each of the other's misery, if faction, which feeds on strife, and on the wrongs which strife does, be amongst them. They may be justly warned, that, if dangers hang over the country, menacing its interests and honour, if distresses come, their strife shall unnerve the arm of the country; that, if their mind be not the same, they shall even forget their soil is the same, they shall forget they are of the same kindred and of the same Christian profession. They shall betray and devour one another.

What sort of benevolence that is, which looks with anxiety to the time of public peace, of peace between nations, we are not required to say. Yet perhaps, it is often but the semblance of benevolence. This our precept of love bears probably on that time with upbraiding more than on the other time of warfare and alarm. These, it is agreeable to experience, mostly tend to unite hearts, whilst peace, it is also agreeable to experience, commonly disunites. It is not usual for

external peace to bring with it internal concord. Her usual concomitants are wealth, and the contentions of wealth; in her train are usually, luxury and the impatience of luxury. We are ourselves now throwing off the burdens of war along with our fears, that we may keep our enjoyments, that we may eat and drink, as we have done, without dread of a foe. And what, I ask, will this state of society, we are so eagerly longing for, do for us? Will luxurious living, at all times pretty free from restraint, at this time nurse and rear any of our virtues, which, if they be virtues, must restrain? Will the bonds of domestic love, already so often rent amongst us, become at this time more fast? Will wealth, that suffers no abridgment, and fears no spoiler, give at this time to the appetite a less morbid craving? Will the rich listen now more than before to the chiding of Christian principles, and endure the severity of Christian practice? And will the poor, who are always unprincipled, and who always crouch to the rich, not copy after the pattern they set? Surely pomps and vanities will come in; and they may come in with a flood, even to the breaking down of the pale, that encompasses the Church, the flock of Jesus Christ, and they may put to the rout that flock; even the wolf, always ready for that prey, may come, as we have just heard he has in a neighbouring country, with superstition, deadly hate, and a tyrant's revenge close after him.

It is possible, we see here, that on the subject of public peace there may be a mistaken benevolence, and especially, if in the Gospel there be no precept on the subject of war, if in all the Bible there be

no duty prescribed to nations, as such, on that, or any other point of conduct. It is allowable for us at home to express regrets at deeds of horror and of blood, which we hear of amongst the nations abroad, but then these feelings, as far as they have respect only to those nations, to their misery or undoing alone, have no place at all amongst moral feelings. It is allowable also for us at home to interfere in some cases, where deeds of that sort are done, as in the case of religious persecution ; but then that interference, to have any thing in it of a moral kind, must have respect to like descriptions of men at home likely to suffer the same from like descriptions of men also at home. If it be a precautionary interference, having respect to the people at home, it is so far moral ; but it is so far only. The other part of the pity having respect to the people abroad is not moral. Our true, our only neighbour, whom we are to love as ourselves, is our neighbour at home.

It will be in vain to refer to the case of the Samaritan in the Gospel, in the way of objection. That case may perhaps be said to be an act of mercy done by one man to his fellow man, but then the point in question is, on what the fellowship between man and man is founded. The case may also be said to be, which is the jet of the objection, an act of mercy done by one man of one nation to another of another. It was, as some will choose to speak, the act of a citizen of the world. But then in strictness, the Samaritan was not of a different nation from the Jew, he relieved. He might have been so once, but he was not so now. He was of

a different religious sect, of a different hostile religious sect, and that religious difference, and that religious hostility had not been done away; but the distinction of nations had. The Samaritan and the Jew were, in the time of our Saviour, strictly considered, fellow citizens; if under a different provincial administration, they were still fellow subjects of the same empire, the Roman. The act of mercy done was by the neighbour, though on a journey, at home, to the neighbour, though also on a journey, also at home; and the praise of the act, was, that in the exercise of compassion every remaining hostile sentiment was dropped, every religious sectarian hostile prejudice; and the duty all are to learn from this act, is—or to apply the lesson to ourselves, *we* are to learn—is, that all Britons, of whatever separate name, and wherever they are, in their own isles, in the colonies, or on the seas, where so many Britons wander in that their empire, are to do to each other, and to all, that fall into their hands, and by so falling come under the protection of the empire, the deeds of mercy required by the laws of God and the laws of the empire, without regard to sect or party; or, to speak to you on the spot here before me, that all Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen, are to do deeds of mercy to one another freely, the Churchman to the Presbyterian, the Presbyterian to the Churchman, and the Presbyterian to the Quaker; that further, not only all private deeds of mercy are to be thus done, but that all public charitable institutions are to be, if I may speak agreeably to the explanation given, *Samaritan institutions*.

Of the considerations we have offered to your notice on this subject,—the subject of mutual love,—it is plain, that these chiefly have respect to the social state of man, generally so taken, or his civil and political state. To be sure, such considerations have in them something, as is also plain, which will suit any state of man, in which men are united by principles and by laws to each other. But then, if there be any social state of man, which has in it several points of distinction from the other, it would be improper to omit noticing the tendencies of this our precept to do good to that state; and particularly, if the precept when given were specially meant for that state, for the good and advantage of it above the other.

The precept was, as we know, addressed by St. Peter, and specially by Christ, from whom St. Peter took it, to the disciples. It was addressed to the Church of Christ, to the members of a social state, far more estimable, in the sight of God, than that which arises from our dwelling together under the same roof, or from our being congregated together in kingdoms, in towns, and cities. It was addressed to the members of a family bound together with a bond closer than any other bond of affinity; for the affinity to which even the house of father and mother is to be forsaken, before the engagement and vow to which, if the comparison be ever to be made, every other engagement of allegiance or of love gives way, and to preserve which affinity even migration to another country, the most painful exile, may be necessary.

If, then, to the house which the hands of men

build, concord be a blessing, and discord a calamity, they will likewise be each respectively so to this house, which is the work of God. Though this house be his work, it shall not escape injury; though it has cost an expense, a large expense of mercy, though he be still anxious to preserve it, it shall by disunion be marred. God has promised only, that it shall not come to total ruin; he has not promised, that it shall not take harm. And how plain a point in history is it, that this building has been thus hurt; and how plain a point in morals also, is it, that they greatly offend, who make a rent in it, who disfigure or pull away its precious stones, who spoil its gold and silver ornaments.

Let those who do, or mean this wrong, remember, that the Church of Christ is not with all its family on earth only. A part of it is in heaven; and let such remember, that the perfection, which is to that part, is the perfection of love. That part has its peculiar grace in heaven, the grace greater than faith and hope, the grace of love.

The Church of Christ is represented as a kingdom, with Jesus for its King; and all, who are of this kingdom, have the like expectation and hope, have the same blessing and life, are under the same discipline of the Holy Ghost, enjoy the like comfort flowing from him, and are guided alike by his counsel. If we profess, then, to honour and love our King, we are not, by disunion, to impede the progress of his government, and to hinder the flow of his mercy, the descent of his blessings; we are not, by our vanity, and folly, and pride, to throw a shade over his efforts, who is fighting our battles

against the world, the flesh, and the devil; we are not thus to weaken his strength, and lessen the lustre of his victory.

There are also other representations, under which the Church of Christ is spoken of, that suit this topic. She is represented as a bride espoused to a bridegroom, and what shall be the joy of that espousal, if there be not the sympathy, such as Christ has with his friends, if there be not union of hearts, if our hearts be not as Christ's?

The Church is likewise said to be the very body of Christ; and if there be division in the members, where shall be the health of this body? In no history is it to be found, in no observations of the wise, that contention should increase the strength or prosperity of any establishment. In the natural body, and in the body politic, it is ever a curse, that the members should be at default and in disorder, that the different functions should jar with each other. It must be a curse to the Christian body. At this time, the father of evil triumphs, and though he shall not ultimately triumph, yet, at this time, the wicked run riot, and the good hide their heads. At this time, the Church is tossed, as with a tempest; a bark, indeed, that shall not finally perish, but, shivered with the beatings of the blast, and to the alarm of the few within, nigh to sinking.

The Church is now not secure, nor can the increase of its members be expected. Who will enter the doors of a house that is not secure; who will be an inmate with those, who dwell together not in love?

It is well known, that the cross of Christ is not the object of men's affections and desires. Had men loved the Redeemer, they would not have put him to such a death, as the death of the cross; and had they loved him, since he died, his cross would have been now the banner of all nations. But they will certainly not come to the cross, whose worshippers are not purified from spite and malice; they will not believe in the blood, which is reported to cleanse, but does not cleanse from malevolent sentiments.

Besides, few in number are Christians always. Little always is the flock. But it will at this time be still less. Severe always is the conflict of a Christian; many always are his struggles and trials. They are more perhaps than other men's. But they will at this time be still more. The Christian has need of the Spirit's aid, and to be sure, he shall always have that aid. But he has need too, of the aid of a brother; he has need too, of the countenance of a friend. How shall he rejoice with them that do rejoice; how weep with them that weep, if he be alone? How shall he, we might almost dare to say, be a Christian, alone?

My brethren, be of one mind in your own house, where the table is one.

Be of one mind with your King and country, with the King, mentioned first as the head of that country, with your country, which takes in the King again, and yourselves. Let that political body have but one mind.

If it has pleased God, in the course of his providence, which it doubtless has, to give to that poli-

tical body a right mind, see that you all, being in unity with it, nurture that mind. It is unnecessary to say any thing on the principles of liberty, as a part of the essence of our political constitution. That Honourable Corporation, before whom I speak, knows how to maintain them. That Honourable Corporation has the courage to maintain them. They have shown that they hate oppression and wrong; in the hearing of all the nation, and as an example to it, they have lifted up their voice against them. May you always do so.

It is more suitable to advert to the Christian principles, which obtain in the country, to the leaven of the Gospel, which pervades every spot in it; it is more suitable to advert to the institutions of the country, to the system of education, and to all the other charities, which adorn and bless it. May you ever guard these from loss and harm.

Neither is it unsuitable here, where the name of one pious King is had in honour, to mention the saying of another, whom you all remember with love, and who is not yet gone from us, though he can speak no more such sayings, that it was his wish every child in his dominions might be able to read his Bible. Let this saying be ever told of in this Hospital, and let it be ever borne in mind, in all its meaning, by you, who are the Masters and Teachers in this a King's Hospital.

My brethren, be of one mind with the Church of Christ. If in other affinities and connexions your virtue is to be of a sterner sort, yet in this there must be the softest sympathy. If for liberty's sake you be bold, you must for Christ's sake be gentle.

If you be members of Christ's body, of that precious body, you know how that body is fed and nurtured and made to increase; how it is kept in health by love and pity from above. You must, believe me, have the heart of love and pity too. You know, you must, if you remember Jesus, if you remember him, who died through love for you and for your brethren, not yours only, but his own.

XXVI.

THE FIRST VERSE OF THE FIRST CHAPTER OF GENESIS.

[Preached in Trinity College Chapel, on Tuesday, Nov. 19, 1816; being the Day for the Sacrament for the Term.]

GENESIS I. i.

In the beginning GOD *created the Heaven and the Earth.*

It has been often remarked of the Bible, that it is a book written with great plainness and simplicity, that though it is a book treating of the highest matters, yet that those high matters are told in the plainest and most simple speech. And certainly this sentence, with which the book opens, is as remarkable an instance of that sort of speech, as can be produced perhaps out of all the book. The thing spoken of, the Creation of the Heaven and the Earth, is certainly, when carefully considered, a very great wonder. What indeed can be so great a wonder as the Creation of this Universe, in which we are, of which we are a part, and in which we are, so to speak, ourselves at present at least, shut in, and fast enclosed? Yet the wonderful act is but told us as a thing done, and nothing more said, nothing at

least of the manner in which, or of the reason, why it is done. Nor is the sentence the less remarkable for its being the sentence with which the book opens. It is usual in the books which men write, especially when they write of things of a marvellous nature, to prepare by a preface the mind of the reader for what they are to tell; to find varnish for the tale; to use glozing, soothing, coaxing speech, that there may be no shock either to the understanding, or the feelings. But in this opening of the Bible, we see no such practice; it is, though concerning a great wonder, quite a plain sentence in which the reader is *first* accosted.

It may be supposed, and indeed it may well be so supposed, that this high matter is put in this way as being told from authority, which always speaks with brevity and plainness. It may be supposed to be especially suitable for Almighty God, who is first in authority over all, to speak in this way; that it would be degrading, that it would be letting himself down, for him to try to win over men to a belief of what he says, by a preface, by preparatory words, by words preparing the way for the reception of any wonderful fact, or mysterious doctrine. And to be sure the supposition is just enough, because there are not wanting instances, especially in the Old Testament, where the speech coming from God is plain, brief, peremptory. But then perhaps it may be allowable to say against this notion, that it may not necessarily apply to this sentence with which the Bible opens; it may be allowable certainly to say against it, that there are not wanting instances in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, where Almighty God, though so great and

mighty, though so far above all other gods and lords, does condescend to win over men to a belief of what he says by preparatory or persuasive speech. Certainly our Saviour used persuasive speech; certainly he did not all at once tell who he was, or what he came for. He used even dark parables to prepare men for the lightsome Gospel. Nor did the Apostles themselves act otherwise. They were indeed to speak out, to tell men all the counsel of God, as we also are to do, but even they, though they had this commission, used argument and eloquence, tried various explanations, and unfolded prophecies, to bring men to the Cross, to make men receive Jesus, to induce men to believe, and be justified by believing.

It is possible, there might be other reasons, why the book opens thus. It is possible, there might be these two. In the first place. it was not usual in the most ancient writings, to judge at least of the most ancient which we have not, from the less ancient which we have, and especially in historical writings, to use other than the plainest and shortest forms of speech in the narration of facts. It was not usual to decorate facts with dazzling ornament, to spoil by dress their naked truth. In the next place, it might be necessary for the Author of the Universe to put in distinctly his claim as being that Author. At the time when Moses wrote, the claim of the real Maker of heaven and earth might have been greatly lost to the world. Indeed we know that at the time he wrote, the world was far gone in idolatrous corruptions; that idols were worshipped in company with Jehovah himself, and shared in Jehovah's honours. We know that images being

idols, were used as charms; were worn as protectors of property and the person from harm; we know that the arts of magic were practised, that there were even Colleges, so to speak, of diviners, soothsayers and magicians; that there were priests who, while they were priests to the God of heaven and earth, were also priests to the Sun, or Moon, or other the stars of heaven, and were even priests to brute beasts, creeping things, and birds, whom they honoured as they honoured Jehovah, and whom they placed by his altars and laid up in his temples, to be adored and to be sacrificed to, with the same rites, and the same victims, he was worshipped with. And this being so, this being the sad state of the world, when the book of God was written, it might be necessary in the opening of the book, distinctly and expressly to separate Almighty God from the other gods with whom he had been put in company, and to give him his true distinction, his true claim, the distinction and claim belonging only to him, of having been in the beginning the maker of heaven and earth.

At the time Moses wrote, it had pleased Almighty God to separate one nation from the other nations of the earth, to separate this nation to himself to be his peculiar nation, to be under his special government and sway, to be the people ruled by his sceptre, as their special king, in a way distinct from his general authority over all other nations, and it might be necessary when the book of GOD, when the oracles of GOD were written for this people, and at the very time of their separation, to place in the very front of that book, at the very head of GOD'S oracles, that very sentence, which was to

separate Almighty God himself unto this people, to separate him from all the other gods of the earth. Indeed the necessity for so doing is nearly evident, for we know that the very people, for whom the book was chiefly written, were, at the time it was written, with great difficulty kept from sinking into the grossest idolatry, notwithstanding all that was done for them in delivering them out of Egypt, out of the bondage of deep slavery and misery; we know that this people, notwithstanding all the fatherly care of Moses, and all the fatherly care of Jehovah himself, always himself present with them, as much as Moses himself, did once revolt, and in their revolt make to themselves an idol to worship, even a brute beast, to fall down to, and sacrifice to; nay, we know that every reader, whether Israelite or Heathen, into whose hands this book might fall, did, in whatever country he lived, live in the midst of idolaters, and saw wherever he went, the most corrupt mixture of truth and falsehood, saw Jehovah himself, though not entirely thrust out of the temple, yet put on a level with idols, and even less honoured, as he is now by Papists less honoured, than those idols, and that he had therefore great need, on opening this book, to have his attention immediately called to him, whose book it was, to be rouzed to consider who was the true God, the true maker of heaven and earth, nor indeed to be awakened only at the opening of the book to this truth, but to be prepared by it for the same lesson, which runs through the whole book, which is taught much in the Old Testament, and in no inconsiderable degree also in the New Testament itself. The reader was by this first, this first emphatical sen-

tence, if he were an idolater, or in danger of being such, to be prepared for the same lesson ever to be read throughout the book, again and again, concerning him who was the true, the only true GOD, besides whom there was no other GOD, who of all the gods pretended to be such, was the only one who could create and could destroy, who could kill and make alive, who could redeem, and bless and save.

It might further be necessary thus to put in distinctly the claim of God to be the Author and Former of the Universe, with reference even to opinions prevailing at the time that Moses wrote. The corrupt practice of mankind would be a main reason for so doing, but there might be opinions also then prevalent which were of a baneful nature, tending to hide God from men. We know there were men, long before the time of Moses, who in things they understood not blasphemed, who set at nought the future judgment of God, who made hard speeches,* who made bold, swelling speeches, springing out of the puffings of conceit, and the swellings of pride, and we know that Moses had himself something to do with Egyptian Magicians and with apostate Israelites; nor are we ignorant how after his time error grew in various shapes, how it grew and covered nearly all the earth, smothering every good, or blighting every true religious principle. There have been those, we know, who, even in opinion as well as in practice, have shut out GOD from the Universe he made. There have been, who have thought the world to be eternal, to have had no beginning; who have spoken of it, as

* Jude 14, 15.

of a machine, that had no maker. There have been also those, we know, who have thought the world to be a sort of GOD to itself, to be its own GOD, who have thought that there was a something in the Universe, a something in the matter of it pervading the whole of it, and mixed with it, that was the GOD of the whole of it. To the first of these, how plain is the speech, and how necessary, that there was a beginning to the Universe, and that that was the beginning, when GOD made it; that there was a time of its birth, that it was born to the voice of GOD heard before that birth. To the others also of these vain reasoners, how plain is the speech, and how also necessary, that the Creation was by a Creator, as by a workman standing by his work, standing by it to form it, to put it together, to adorn it; that when done, it was put out of his hands, as a machine fit for its use, as a machine for superintendence only, for to be watched over and waited on only; that when put out of hand, it was viewed and pronounced to be good.

After stating these points, which we consider, as being first and specially in the mind of the writer, when he wrote, as being suited for the age, in which Moses lived, for the people, amongst whom he wrote, and for the heathen, into whose hands his writings might then fall, we may now state such general uses, as this sentence placed at the head of the Bible may be well supposed to have; such as are for the men of all after ages and all climes, such as may do good to us who live now. It is of use to men generally, that in religious and moral instruction they should be dealt with in the way of authority. In all the parts of religious and moral in-

struction there will generally, if not always, be something, which will be beyond our comprehension. Even in the plainest parts of religion and morals, in those, which seem most easy, and which at the first mention we may think we comprehend, there will be almost always something, when the matter comes to be thoroughly sifted, which will be out of our depth. Who can understand the thought and design of GOD? Who in this case, can understand the mystery of Creation? Who can know how matter was itself brought forth, how the heavens and the earth were made out of nothing, how they were made by the word of GOD only? The fact that they were so made is all that can be told, and it is told in order to be believed. The fact is told for faith to admit and acknowledge, and on the authority of him only who tells it. "*Through faith,*" says an Apostle, "*we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*"* And so this sentence at the head of the Bible, the first in it, is for faith, as well as its other sentences are, which with this first make up the book.

It is for a general benefit to men, that they be told who he is, to whom they owe their being, how he is the maker of all things, the maker of heaven and earth, that they be told this in the very outset of their acquaintance with him, in order that they may approach him with reverence, and speak of his works with reverence both those in their immediate view, and all others which they may hereafter see and know. It is for the good of men, that they

* Heb. xi. 3.

acquiesce in their being the property of God, and in the manner of their existence; that they dispute not about the terms on which they are to live on earth, the terms being agreeable to the will of the maker; that they say not in their hearts, as they are apt to do, this, or that, could be better than it is. Where the materials, of which all things were made, do all entirely belong to the maker, he has an undoubted right to put them into the form and fashion which he chuses; and where the workman is but one, and besides whom there is no other, who shall not conform to the law of his being, who not stay in the place, he is appointed to stay in, and who not move to the point, he is commanded to move to? Who that seeks his happiness, shall not find it in the knowledge of his maker's name, and his maker's will?

If there be any thing in the subsequent part of the Bible relating to the maker of the Universe, what is the true description of him, or what is his name, it will be proper enough for us to consider it here. We are always by scripture to explain, or at least to illustrate scripture. In this first sentence indeed of the Bible an important point concerning the description, or the name of the maker, though it may not appear to the English reader of the verse, is supposed by some not to be entirely concealed. It is thought that the name here given, and which we call God, and which is given him by us from his being so good, denotes more than one person in the Deity, and certainly there is reason for thinking thus of the name. It is certainly a plural name, not plural by a grammar rule only, but by a rule of nature's own making, and which the grammar in

this case from her derives. But, however this be, in the following pages of the Bible there is an account given of the maker, which directs us to the three persons of the Godhead, to them as conspiring to create the world, as combining each his power, perhaps, in some sense, each his office, in producing the Universe. They have, we know, each his office in the redemption of man, and if that redemption were in the counsel of God, in the counsel of the three persons of the Godhead from all eternity, themselves existing from all eternity, then they might exercise in some sense, each the office he had in producing this dwelling-place for man to dwell in, this dwelling-place for GOD and man to be in some sense together in, the earth for man, the heaven and the earth for GOD.

We may in this place itself see the third person of the Trinity, the Spirit moving upon the face of the waters, preparing after the manner of his office on the heart, the matter over which he moved for obedience to the voice that was soon to speak, the voice of the Son the second person of the Trinity. That it was the Son who spake, and by speaking created, appears from the testimony of St. John writing thus; "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*"* Nor is there in the Old Testament itself any other sentiment than this. Let us remark what is said by Solomon of him, whose name is Wisdom. "*When the Lord prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of*

* John i. 1, 2, 3.

the depth; when he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep. When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by him."* Upon which two passages it may well be said, that the Father and the Son, who was *by him*, did together will the same work, did conspire to create, the one in silent thought, in silent counsel, the other the minister of that thought and counsel, the other the voice formed in the eternal conception of that thought. It has been said by an Ancient of the Church, and to be sure, innocently enough said, that the Son and the Holy Ghost were on this occasion *the hands of the Father*.† It has also been said, and by more than one Ancient, and doubtless also innocently enough, with reference to a division of the work, and to the above description by Solomon, that the Father prepared and the Son garnished the heavens, that the Father placed the pillars of the earth, and the Son adorned them, that the Father set the compass upon the face of the deep, and the Son drew the bounds, the measures, and the lines. This is innocently enough said, for the work though thus divided, required in each division equal power, equal omnipotence. And as this is innocently said, so the saying has also a beauty in it. The Son of God, is, we know, the glory of the Universe, he is its light and glory; he is the grace of it; he is the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his Father's person; he is too, as he was thus the author of the Old, so after

* Prov. viii, 27, 28, 29, 30.
† Irenæus, B. iv. c. 20. B. v. c. 1. and 6. Massuet's Edit.

a like sort, after a sort admitting a like comparison between himself and the Father, the author of the New Creation, the Father planning, the Son giving to the plan its perfection and beauty.

In the further consideration of this matter we may remark, that by this authoritative or peremptory way of speaking in a book intended for the instruction of man, for man's religious and moral instruction, a slight is put on that species of instruction which has long prevailed amongst us, and does still extensively prevail, at least in Christendom, in which men are taught that they may, or do know the being and the attributes of God from the principles of reason and nature. To be sure, before the coming of Christ, that species of instruction did not prevail at all; it is only since his coming that it has been heard of, and gained such footing. The notions before his coming were generally these; 1st, That there was no God or Gods, which however was a notion held by very few. Next, that if there were Gods, they took upon themselves no management of the Universe, they took no, as we speak, providential care of it; then again another, that the Universe was eternal, which was the conclusion from the reasoning commonly in use amongst us, the reasoning commonly also called by us the "*a posteriori*" reasoning, and which is undoubtedly the true conclusion from that reasoning, notwithstanding the authority of Locke and others, who have drawn from it another, but which other is the false. It is unnecessary to mention this their conclusion, and we go on to state the fourth notion, which prevailed before the coming of Christ, and which prevailed almost universally; and the notion is this, that the Universe was an

animated being, having within it a sort of soul pervading every part, which had been the contriver of the existence of the Universe in which it was enclosed, or at least was the contriver of all the changes of the Universe, and the author of all the uses, and all the benefits, resulting from the variety and wisdom apparent in it. Nor was this notion other than the true conclusion, that ought to be drawn from the evidences of skill and wisdom to be found in the Universe, notwithstanding the authority of Paley and others, who in viewing the contrivances of creation have discovered, or have said they discovered a contriver existing out of the Universe, and besides it. The fifth and last notion which prevailed during that period was this, and which, though it was not so general as the last, was yet the opinion of some of the best and wisest, of some at least of those wise men, who after exhausting all their thought and wisdom on the subject despaired of a proof from reason; the fifth and last notion, I say, was this, that GOD could only be known by revelation, or by our being told that he existed. It is almost unnecessary to add, that this last notion of the Heathen wise, reluctantly perhaps taking it up, is the true notion; that it is the principle on which the Bible speaks throughout, the very principle on which the Bible opens, when speaking in its very first sentence, in the text, of the being and the power of GOD, the power, which is the leading divine attribute, perhaps the attribute, in which all the other supposed attributes do at last merge.

The proof that this last notion, which a few of the Heathen wise maintained, is the true, we have

elsewhere given, nor has it, that I know of, been pretended to by any other, or been contradicted by any.* Yet still the same species of metaphysical reasoning, and which was, as we have said, unknown to the Heathen philosophers, is persisted in by Christian writers and Christian preachers; the Socinian still talks of a metaphysical unity of God, though he can from revelation only know the very existence of God, and we have lately seen a prize of great value adjudged by an University to a work written in the bosom of it, which is nothing better than a repetition, I had almost said a compilation of the same false metaphysics.† This is still done amongst us, notwithstanding it is so plain, that nothing can be more so, that man with his material body moves up and down in a material element, receiving only material impressions, receiving ideas through sensation only. This is still done, notwithstanding it is so plain, that nothing can be more so, that the re-action, or the rebound, so to speak of those impressions is upon the medium, which is a material mass, through and by which they were made, upon the mass of the element man moves in, a circumstance totally of itself hindering all knowledge of any being out of or besides the Universe. If there come a voice, which if it do come, comes after the fashion of the human voice; if there come such a voice, saying, "I am," man then knows that Jehovah is, but by that voice only.

What revelations have been made to man, besides those of the Bible, it is impossible to say. That

* See the Sermon on the *Baptism of Infants and Instruction.*

† An Essay in two volumes on the Existence of a Supreme Creator, by W. L. Brown, D. D. Principal of Marischal College, and University of Aberdeen, to which was adjudged Mr. Burnett's first prize of 1200*l.* Aug. 4, 1815.

there have been such cannot be doubted, nay, that there have been many made. Whether any of these survive the changes and inroads of superstition, or the wreck of the nations where they were made, it would be hazardous to say. It is probable a few do, such as the sentiments that have every where existed and still every where exist concerning sacrifice, and the plainer points of duty, which are, the honour due to parents, and the prohibitions against theft and murder. But then, if this notion which we maintain, be the true, and if the proof we give, be just, be indisputable, then, of what value must the Bible be, to the authority of the revelations of which we can without hesitation speak? How solicitous ought we to be to put into the hands of men that book which is the voice of GOD, saying, "I am," and beside whom there is no other! How solicitous ought we to be, that that book should be read in every tongue spoken in the earth! How solicitous, that the name of the true GOD should be every where known, the name of the Father, and the name of the Son, and the name of the Holy Ghost! How solicitous, that there should be no more death by sacrifice, all knowing from that book, that the Son of GOD Jesus Christ once for all dying there ought to be no more death by sacrifice! And what, Sirs, we go on to say, must those men be, who lock up this book, who hide it from the eyes of the people? and what Sirs, must those men also be, who by slander depreciate the dispersion of this book; who are jealous of men's reading and searching the Scriptures; who insinuate, that that practice is to be suspected, which always from the

foundation of the Israelitish Church was the practice of the most *unlearned* of the Jews, and which the very Heathen, *the very idolaters* of Greece, when they turned from their idols, were commended for doing!

May God, my brethren, deliver the Church of England from men of false principles and of corrupt and perverse minds.

THE END.

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